

A photograph of the interior of a Byzantine church, looking up at a large, ornate golden dome. The dome is covered in mosaics, including a central figure (likely the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child) and a circular band of figures. The walls are decorated with panels and intricate carvings. Light streams in from a window with a grid of small circular openings at the base of the dome.

EDITED BY

ELLEN C.  
**SCHWARTZ**

≡ The Oxford Handbook of  
**BYZANTINE ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE**

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF  
BYZANTINE  
ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE



THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

---

BYZANTINE  
ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE

---

*Edited by*

ELLEN C. SCHWARTZ

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

© Oxford University Press 2021

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Names: Schwartz, Ellen C. (Ellen Carol), 1947- editor.  
Title: The Oxford handbook of Byzantine art and architecture / edited by Ellen C. Schwartz.  
Description: New York : Oxford University Press, [2021] |  
Includes bibliographical references and index. |  
Identifiers: LCCN 2020057003 (print) | LCCN 2020057004 (ebook) |  
ISBN 9780190277352 (hardback) | ISBN 9780197572207 (epub) |  
ISBN 9780190277369 | ISBN 9780190277376  
Subjects: LCSH: Art, Byzantine. | Architecture, Byzantine.  
Classification: LCC N6250 .O94 2021 (print) |  
LCC N6250 (ebook) | DDC 709.02/14—c23  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020057003>  
LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020057004>

DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190277352.001.0001

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

*To my family of origin:*

*Sid L. Schwartz (1912–1991)*

*Sylvia Schwartz (1912–1997)*

*and my family of choice:*

*Frank Whelon Wayman*

*Eric Alan Wayman*

*Abraham (Bram) Mark Wayman*

*and*

*Alexander Mark Wayman (June–August 1983)*



# CONTENTS

---

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiii
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xv
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxix

<i>Introduction: “The Artifice of Eternity”</i>	1
ELLEN C. SCHWARTZ	

## PART ONE: APPROACHING BYZANTINE ART

1. The Origin of Icons	21
THOMAS F. MATHEWS	
2. Byzantine Art and Perception	31
BISSERA V. PENTCHEVA	
3. <i>Spolia</i> in Byzantine Art and Architecture	47
BENTE KIILERICH	
4. The Icon	59
REBECCA W. CORRIE	
5. Iconoclasm	75
LESLIE BRUBAKER	
6. Magic and Byzantine Art	85
JACQUELYN TUERK-STONBERG	
7. Bodily Adornment and Modification in Byzantium	99
ALICIA WALKER	



8. Secular Art	117
MARIA G. PARANI	
9. The Imperial Arts	133
BENJAMIN ANDERSON	
10. Private Collecting and the Art Market for Byzantine Artifacts	147
CHRISTIAN SCHMIDT	
11. The Byzantine Arts and Byzantine Literature	159
HENRY MAGUIRE	
<b>PART TWO: RECEPTION OF BYZANTINE ART AND ARCHITECTURE</b>	
<i>Neighbors to the East and South</i>	175
12. Armenia	177
CHRISTINA MARANCI	
13. Georgia	189
ZAZA SKHIRTADZE	
14. Islamic States and the Middle East	201
ERICA CRUIKSHANK DODD	
<i>Looking Westward</i>	215
15. Italy, the Crusader States, and Cyprus	217
MARIA GEORGOPOULOU	
16. South Slavic Lands	235
LJUBOMIR MILANOVIĆ	
<i>After the Fall</i>	253
17. “Byzance après Byzance” and Post-Byzantine Art from the Late Fifteenth Century through the Eighteenth Century	255
HENRY D. SCHILB	
18. The Byzantine Revival in Europe	271
J. B. BULLEN	

---

PART THREE: THE REALIA OF  
BYZANTINE ART

<i>Archaeology</i>	285
19. Archaeology: Sites and Approaches ERIC A. IVISON	287
<i>Architecture</i>	307
20. Religious Architecture MARINA MIHALJEVIĆ	309
21. Devotional Practices and the Development of the Church Building NEBOJŠA STANKOVIĆ	331
22. Secular Architecture: Domestic CAROLYN S. SNIVELY	351
23. Secular Architecture: Military STAVROS I. ARVANITOPOULOS	363
24. Acceptance and Adaptation of Byzantine Architectural Types in the “Byzantine Commonwealth” MARK J. JOHNSON	373
<i>Decoration of Structures/Byzantine Wall Decoration</i>	389
25. Mosaics LIZ JAMES	391
26. Monumental Painting: Pre-Iconoclasm ELIZABETH S. BOLMAN	409
27. Monumental Painting: Post-Iconoclasm SHARON E. J. GERSTEL	423
28. Stone Sculpture SARAH T. BROOKS	443
<i>Portable Media</i>	457
29. Illuminated Manuscripts: Religious SUSAN MADIGAN MCCOMBS	459

30. Illuminated Manuscripts: Secular CHRISTINE HAVICE	481
31. Liturgical Objects HOLGER A. KLEIN	495
32. Bronze and Copper Icons ELLEN C. SCHWARTZ	515
33. Amulets, Crosses, and Reliquaries BRIGITTE PITARAKIS	525
34. Ivories and Steatites CAROLYN L. CONNOR	541
35. Ceramics DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI	551
36. Glass ANASTASSIOS ANTONARAS	565
37. Jewelry and Enamels ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUICKBIE	575
38. Textile Media WARREN T. WOODFIN	593
<i>Index</i>	607

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

WORKS like this are extended labors of love on the parts of many.

First, I must thank my contributors. This is an amazing, diverse group of authors who offered their best work for the benefit of students and scholars in many fields. It has been a deep pleasure to work with them, and I truly appreciate their efforts. Special thanks go to Prof. Sharon E. J. Gerstel for arranging my initial contact with Oxford University Press (OUP) many years ago, and for a number of suggestions throughout the process.

Next, my thanks to the OUP professionals with whom I was privileged to work. First on the list for appreciation is the original series editor Sarah Pirovitz Humphreville, for prodding and shepherding the volume through the initial years of its creation. She was ably succeeded by Stefan Vranka, whom I wish to thank for his energy and ability to nimbly guide the book to its completion, giving it its final elegant appearance. Editorial Assistant Zara Cannon-Mohammed was very helpful with details, helping to keep the project on track. Senior Production Editor Melissa Yanuzzi kept things moving smoothly, and communicated efficiently and effectively about all developments. Copyeditor Timothy J. DeWerff cleaned up the entire text, a Herculean task. Cartographer George Chakvetadze created our clear, readable maps. Thank you to all of you!

Libraries here in southeastern Michigan were essential to my work; I express appreciation to the University of Michigan libraries, as well as to Eastern Michigan University, my home institution, for its interlibrary loan service. The MelCat (Michigan Electronic Library Catalogue) offers a model to many states for the sharing of resources in a timely, efficient, and cost-saving manner. (Books arriving on the bloodmobile makes for a really fast delivery!)

My friends (some of whom wrote for this volume) sustained me with words of encouragement in person, email, and by phone. I want to single out Dr. Edith S. Klein for professional advice, as well as for friendship over the past forty-five years.

And finally, to my family: I couldn't do any of this without you! My sons, Eric Wayman and Bram Wayman, helped with computer issues, along with pep talks and expressions of enthusiasm and support. They were also great travel companions, patiently putting up with destinations that would challenge any visitor.

And to my husband, Frank Whelon Wayman, a fine author and editor in his own right: my greatest thanks for your support and encouragement. Your lovely comment made my introduction more informative and graceful. I especially appreciated your unflinching ear for the tone of emails and phone conversations when situations grew delicate. You have been a model, a guide, a cheering section, and so much more. My eternal love and thanks!



## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

---

**Benjamin Anderson**, Professor of the History of Art and Classics, Cornell University

**Anastassios Antonaras**, Curator of Antiquities, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki

**Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos**, Visiting Professor, Department of Philology (Byzantine World: Its Relation to Antiquity and Modern Hellenism), University of the Peloponnese

**Elizabeth S. Bolman**, Elsie B. Smith Professor in the Liberal Arts, and Chair, Department of Art History and Art, Case Western Reserve University

**Antje Bosselmann-Ruickbie**, Assistant Professor of Art History, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

**Sarah T. Brooks**, Professor of Art History, James Madison University

**Leslie Brubaker**, Professor of Byzantine Art Emerita and Director, Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham

**J. B. Bullen**, Professor, Kellogg College, University of Oxford

**Carolyn L. Connor**, Professor Emerita of Byzantine Studies, University of North Carolina

**Rebecca W. Corrie**, Phillips Professor of Art and Visual Culture Emerita, Bates College

**Erica Cruikshank Dodd**, Adjunct Associate Professor, Byzantine and Islamic Art and Architecture, University of Victoria

**Maria Georgopoulou**, Director, Gennadius Library, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens

**Sharon E. J. Gerstel**, George P. Kolovos Family Centennial Term Chair in Hellenic Studies and Director, UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture, University of California, Los Angeles

**Christine Havice**, Director Emerita, School of Art, Kent State University

**Eric A. Ivison**, Professor of History, College of Staten Island CUNY and CUNY Graduate Center

**Liz James**, Professor of Art History, University of Sussex

**Mark J. Johnson**, Professor of Art History, Brigham Young University

**Bente Kiilerich**, Professor of Art History, University of Bergen

**Holger A. Klein**, Lisa and Bernard Selz Professor of Medieval Art History, Columbia University

**Henry Maguire**, Professor Emeritus, Johns Hopkins University

**Christina Maranci**, Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art, Tufts University

**Thomas F. Mathews**, Professor Emeritus, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

**Susan Madigan McCombs**, Associate Professor Emerita, Michigan State University

**Marina Mihaljević**, Associate Professor of Art and Architectural History, State University of Novi Pazar

**Ljubomir Milanović**, Senior Research Associate, The Institute for Byzantine Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA), Belgrade

**Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi**, Director Emerita, The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia

**Maria G. Parani**, Associate Professor of Byzantine Art and Archaeology, University of Cyprus, Nicosia

**Bissera V. Pentcheva**, Professor of Art History, Stanford University

**Brigitte Pitarakis**, Senior Researcher, Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), Paris

**Henry D. Schilb**, Art History Specialist, The Index of Medieval Art, Princeton University

**Christian Schmidt**, Collector

**Ellen C. Schwartz**, Professor of Art History Emerita, School of Art & Design, Eastern Michigan University

**Zaza Skhirtladze**, Head, Institute of Art History and Theory, Tbilisi State University

**Carolyn S. Snively**, Professor of Classics Emerita, Gettysburg College

**Nebojša Stanković**, Professor of Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Priština, Kosovska Mitrovica

**Jacquelyn Tuerk-Stonberg**, Assistant Professor of Ancient, Byzantine, and Medieval Art History, Kean University

**Alicia Walker**, Associate Professor of History of Art, Bryn Mawr College

**Warren T. Woodfin**, Kallinikeion Associate Professor of Byzantine Studies, Art Department, Queens College, CUNY

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

---

- I.1. Map of sites, Early Byzantine Empire. © Oxford University Press. 4
- I.2. Map of sites, Middle Byzantine Empire. © Oxford University Press. 5
- I.3. Map of sites, Late Byzantine Empire at different times. © Oxford University Press. 6
- 2.1. Hagia Sophia, 537 CE, axonometric drawing of the interior. From R. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure, and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (London: 1988), fig. 252. Reproduced with the permission of Mainstone. 33
- 2.2. Hagia Sophia, mosaic in the apse, 867. The Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks Fieldwork Records and Papers, ca. late 1920s–2000s, U859613, MS.BZ.004, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, DC. Photograph: Courtesy of Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, DC. 37
- 2.3. (also Color Plate 1A).  
Icon of the Archangel Michael, late tenth century, gems, gold, and cloisonné enamel. Detail of the head; left eye looks down as the candle is raised high. Photo: Bissera V. Pentcheva, © Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice. 39
- 2.4. Icon of the Archangel Michael, late tenth century, gems, gold, and cloisonné enamel. Detail of the head, the shadow in the upper segment of the eye suggest a gaze looking up. Photo: Bissera V. Pentcheva, © Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice. 40
- 3.1. Egyptian obelisk spoliated by Theodosius I, Istanbul Hippodrome, 390. Photo: B. Kiilerich. 49
- 3.2. Roman statue base with Amazonomachy reused with Christian mosaics in the ambo, Basilica of Alkison, Nicopolis, ca. 500. Flickr, Creative Commons; photo: Dan Diffendale. 50
- 3.3. Funerary stele with cross; Byzantine spolium with crosses of different date, north side, Little Metropolis, Athens, ca. 1456. Photo: B. Kiilerich. 53



- 4.1. Christ Pantokratōr, first half of the sixth century. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. 62
- 4.2 (also Color Plate 1B).  
 Virgin and Child *Glykophilousa*, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, attributed to Southern Italy or Dalmatian coast. Collection of Dr. Andreas Pittas, Limassol, Cyprus. Photo through courtesy and by permission of Dr. Andreas Pittas. 64
- 4.3 (also Color Plate 2).  
 Crucifixion with Deesis Surrounded by Saints, ca. 1200. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. 66
- 4.4. Icon of St. George, from Lod, Israel mid-thirteenth century. © British Museum. 68
- 4.5. St. Alexis the Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia with the Holy Face, date unknown. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. 71
- 6.1 (also Color Plate 3A) and 6.2.  
 Amulet, incised hematite and silver mount, 5 × 3.7 × 1 cm, sixth or seventh century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.491, Reproduced from The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection Online Catalog, public domain, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464456/>. 88
- 6.3 and 6.4.  
 Amulet, bronze, 5.4 cm, first half of the first century. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan, #26119. Reproduced by permission of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. 92
- 7.1. Watercolor of the wall painting depicting Kolluthos, Theodosia, and Maria, Tomb of Theodosia, Antinoöpolis, Egypt, sixth or seventh century. After Mario Salmi, "I dipinti paleocristiani di Antinoe." In *Scritti dedicati alla memoria di Ippolito Rosellini—nel primo centenario della morte (4 giugno 1943), a cura dell'Università di Firenze* (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1945), pl. h. 102
- 7.2. Female martyrs in procession, mosaic, Church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy, mid-sixth century. Architecture2000/Alamy Stock Photo. 105

- 7.3 (also Color Plate 4).  
Portrait of Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078–1081) flanked by personified virtues (*above*) and courtiers (*below*), tempera and gold on vellum, 42.5 × 31 cm, Byzantine, Constantinople (Istanbul), ca. 1071–1081. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, ms. Coislin 79, fol. 2r. 107
- 7.4. Necklace with pendant of Aphrodite *Anadyomene*, gold, lapis lazuli, ruby, rock crystal, ca. 43 × 20 × 2 cm (ca. 17 × 8 × 1 in), early seventh century, Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington, DC, BZ.1928.6. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC. 111
- 8.1. Wall-hanging with Hestia *Polyolbos*. Wool, 136.5 × 114 cm, first half of the sixth century. Dumbarton Oaks, BZ.1929.1. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC. 119
- 8.2. General view of the north wall with the *magistros* Melias and Ioannes Tzimiskes on horseback at the head of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia in middle register, Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin. Fresco, 963–969. Photo courtesy of Tolga Uyar. 124
- 8.3. Fragment of colonnette with a pattern of peacock feathers from the Hospital of Sampson, Constantinople. Glazed ceramic, tenth century. Dumbarton Oaks, BZ.1962.36.7. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC. 126
- 8.4. The south wall of the outer Golden Gate, Constantinople, with the vestiges of spoliated sculptural decoration. Photo: Ch. Bouras. © Benaki Museum Photographic Archive, Athens, Greece [t2os12\_6]. 127
- 8.5 (also Color Plate 3B).  
Lid of the Projecta Casket, with portrait of married couple, three panels with mythological scenes, and one panel with a procession towards the baths. Inscription: SECVNDE ET PROIECTA VIVATIS IN CHRISTO (Secundus and Proiecta, live in Christ). Silver-gilt, h. 28.6 cm, max. l. 56, max. w. 48.8 cm., ca. 380. British Museum, reg. no. 1866, 1229.1. © The Trustees of the British Museum. 128
- 9.1. Girdle composed of gold coins and medallions assembled ca. 583, discovered near Kyrenia, Cyprus. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. no. 17.190.147; 1991.136. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 134
- 9.2. The “Colossus of Barletta.” Bronze statue of a Roman emperor, probably Leo I (r. 457–474). Photo: B. Anderson. 137
- 9.3. Portraits of Nikephoros Phokas (r. 963–969) and his family, from a niche north of the apse of a rock-cut church in Çavuşin, Turkey. Fresco. Photo: B. Anderson. 138

- 9.4. Eirene, from one of the stucco trees that sprout portraits of the Roman emperors. Library of the Benedictine Abbey in Einsiedeln. Stucco by Josef Anton Feuchtmayer, ca. 1740. Photo: B. Anderson. 142
- 11.1 (also Color Plate 5).  
Cathedral of Poreč, mosaics of the main apse and triumphal arch, mid-sixth century. Photo: Renco Kosinozić. 161
- 11.2. Mosaic icon with scenes from the life of Christ, fourteenth century. Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Art Resource, NY. 166
- 11.3. Icon of the Annunciation to the Virgin. Monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai, late twelfth century. Reproduced through courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria expedition to Mt. Sinai. 168
- 12.1. The church of Mren, ca. 638–640, north façade portal (Kars region, modern eastern Turkey). Photo: Christina Maranci. 179
- 12.2. The Cathedral of Ani, 989–1001, interior to east (Kars region, modern eastern Turkey). Photo: Christina Maranci. 183
- 12.3 (also Color Plate 6A).  
Portraits of King Lewon, Queen Keran, and children, Queen Keran Gospels, 1272 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate MS 2563, fol. 380). © Courtesy of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. 185
- 13.1. Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, fourth century, rebuilt at the turn of fifth–sixth centuries and in the first third of the eleventh century. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze. 190
- 13.2. Ishkhani cathedral. Composition of the Ascension of the Cross in the dome sphere, 1032. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze. 194
- 13.3. Encolpion of Martvili cathedral, tenth century. Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze. 195
- 13.4 (also Color Plate 7).  
Lapsq'aldi Four Gospels, late twelfth century. Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography, Mestia. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze. 198
- 14.1. Capital from the Polyeuktos Monastery, sixth century. National Museum, Istanbul. Photo: E. C. Dodd. 203
- 14.2. Basalt slab from sarcophagus decorated with lamps hanging under an arcade and stylized birds, fifth–sixth centuries. Photo: E. C. Dodd. 203
- 14.3. Courtyard, Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, 715. Photo: E. C. Dodd. 206
- 14.4 (also Color Plate 6B).  
Fresco painting of the Last Judgment, Mar Musa el-Habashi, near Nebek, Syria, 1192. Photo: E. C. Dodd. 211
- 15.1. Coronation of King Roger. Palermo, Church of the Martorana. © 2018. Photo Scala, Florence/Fondo Edifici di Culto—Min. dell'Interno. 219

- 15.2. Pala d'Oro. Venice, San Marco Basilica. © 2018. Photo Scala, Florence. 221
- 15.3. Cimabue (Cenni di Pepo called 1240–1302): Crucifix (before the flood). Florence, Santa Croce. © 2018. Photo Scala, Florence. 224
- 15.4 (also Color Plate 8A).  
Queen Melisende Psalter, f. 7r, Agony in the Garden. © The British Library Board, Ms. Edgerton 1139. 227
- 15.5 (also Color Plate 8B).  
Virgin *Arakiotissa*, Church of the Panagia tou Arakos, Lagoudera, Cyprus. By permission of the Holy Metropolis of Morfou. 230
- 16.1. Portrait of sebastokrator Kaloian and his wife Desislava, before 1259, Church of St. Nicholas at Boiana, Sofia, Bulgaria, north wall of the narthex. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović. 239
- 16.2. Christ before Annas and Caiaphas, detail, fourteenth century, The Rock-Hewn Church, Ivanovo, Bulgaria. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović. 240
- 16.3. Archangel Michael, fresco, eleventh century, Church of St. Nicholas, Koločep Island, Croatia. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović. 242
- 16.4. The Church of the Holy Trinity, interior, western view showing the Dormition of the Virgin, 1272–1276, Sopoćani Monastery, Serbia. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović. 245
- 16.5. The Church of the Annunciation, southern exterior view, ca. 1321, Gračanica Monastery, Serbia. Photo: Nebojša Stanković. 246
- 17.1. Fresco of the Divine Liturgy in the apse of the katholikon of the Kaisariani Monastery. Greece, early eighteenth century. Photo: Henry D. Schilb. 258
- 17.2 (also Color Plate 9A).  
Katholikon of the Voroneţ Monastery, east exterior. Romania, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries. By Dstefanescu via Wikimedia Commons. 259
- 17.3 (also Color Plate 9B).  
Last Judgment, katholikon of the Voroneţ Monastery, west exterior. Romania, ca. 1550. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons. 260
- 17.4. Icon of the *Noli me Tangere*. Crete, seventeenth century, 63 × 47 cm. British Museum 1994,0501.3. © Trustees of the British Museum. 261
- 17.5. Epitaphios. Greece, 1712. Victoria and Albert Museum T.48-1932. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. 263
- 17.6. Michael Damaskinos, icon of the Divine Liturgy. Crete, late sixteenth century, 109 × 87 cm. Museum of St. Catherine, Heraklion. By Cmessier via Wikimedia Commons. 265

- 18.1 (also Color Plate 10).  
Leo von Klenze. Allerheiligen-Hofkirche, Munich, 1826–1837  
(destroyed 1942). Watercolor by Franz Xaver Nachtmann, 1848. 41.6 ×  
31.1. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Sammlung Graphik/Gemälde, used by  
permission. 273
- 18.2. Sara Losh, St. Mary's at Wreay, Cumbria, 1842. Photo: J. B. Bullen. 278
- 20.1. The Church of Hagios Demetrios, Thessaloniki, late fifth century,  
interior of the nave from west. Photo: Yvon Fruneau/Wikimedia  
Commons. 312
- 20.2. The church of Hagia Eirene, after 753, Istanbul, interior view of the  
dome from west. Photo: Gryffindor/Wikimedia Commons. 315
- 20.3. The Monastery of Hosios Loukas, The *katholikon* (*left*), early eleventh  
century, and The Church of Theotokos (*right*), 946–955, exterior from  
east. Photo: Allan T. Kohl/Wikimedia Commons. 317
- 20.4. Eski Imaret Camii, eleventh century, exterior from south. Photo: A.  
Fabbretti/Wikimedia Commons. 321
- 20.5 (also Color Plate 11A).  
Paregoretissa, Arta, 1290, exterior from northeast. Photo: Marion  
Schneider and Christoph Aistleitner/Wikimedia Commons. 324
- 20.6. The Monastery of Christ of Chora, Katholikon, Istanbul, ca. 1316–1320,  
exterior from northeast. Photo: Gryffindor/Wikimedia Commons. 325
- 21.1. Hagia Sophia church (between 1238 and 1263), Trebizond, interior  
looking east. Domed nave of the cross-in-square type with sanctuary  
apse. Photo: Nebojša Stanković, 2009. 333
- 21.2. Church of St. George (1191), Kurbinovo (Republic of North  
Macedonia), sanctuary from northwest. Altar table with bishop's  
throne behind it; prothesis and diakonikon niches to the left and right.  
Photo: Nebojša Stanković, 2016. 335
- 21.3. Church of St. Panteleimon (1164), Nerezi (Republic of North  
Macedonia), templon (partially reconstructed) viewed from west.  
Photo: Nebojša Stanković, 2016. 336
- 21.4 (also Color Plate 12).  
Hilandar Monastery, Mt. Athos (Greece), *katholikon*  
(completed in 1321), interior of the nave looking east. Furnishing,  
which is Post-Byzantine, gives the sense of how a complete Byzantine  
church setting might have looked like. Photo: Nebojša Stanković, 2008. 338
- 21.5. Vatopedi Monastery, Mt. Athos (Greece), *katholikon*, interior of the  
exonarthex (constructed in the early eleventh century, wall paintings  
completed in 1311/12) looking southeast. Photo: Nebojša Stanković, 2008. 342
- 22.1. Plan of southwest Stobi. National Institution Stobi. 353

22.2.	The peristyle courtyard of the “Theodosian Palace” at Stobi, from west. National Institution Stobi.	355
22.3.	Plan of Middle Byzantine houses, Athenian Agora. Athenian Agora Excavations.	357
22.4.	Plan of medieval house 51 at Santomeri. Kostis Kourelis.	359
23.1.	Walls with <i>opus mixtum</i> technique, Peritheorion. © Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos.	368
23.2.	Anapli Gate, Mystras, view from the northwest. © Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos.	369
23.3.	Tower of Karakallou monastery, Mt. Athos. © Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos.	371
24.1.	Church of the Mother of God of Petrichka, at Asenova Krepost, thirteenth century, exterior from southwest. Photo: Mikhal Orela/ Wikimedia Commons.	376
24.2.	Church of the Virgin, Studenica, completed by 1207, aerial view from south. Photo: Dušan Slijivić, used by permission.	377
24.3.	Andronikov Monastery, church, Moscow, 1425–1427, exterior from southeast. Photo: Mark J. Johnson.	381
24.4.	San Marco, Venice, begun 1063, interior view of nave to apse. Photo: Mark J. Johnson.	383
24.5.	SS. Trinità, Delia, near Castelvetrano, ca. 1150, exterior from southeast. Photo: Mark J. Johnson.	385
25.1.	Basilius pictor and the twelfth-century mosaics in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Photo: Liz James.	394
25.2.	Stages in making a mosaic. Drawing by June Winfield, used by permission.	395
25.3.	The fourteenth-century Deesis panel, Chora church, Constantinople. Photo: Liz James.	396
25.4 (also Color Plate 13A).	San Vitale. Photo: Simon Lane, University of Sussex, used by permission.	400
26.1 (also Color Plate 14).	Red Monastery Church, view of triconch sanctuary looking upwards toward the east, Sohag, Egypt, secco and encaustic painting, ca. late fifth–sixth century. © American Research Center in Egypt. Photo: A. Vescovo.	412
26.2.	Tomb of Chrysanthios, watercolor documentation of the paintings of birds, flowers, and imitation marble paneling, Sardis, Turkey, ca. fourth century. © Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/President and Fellows of Harvard College. Artist: L. J. Majewski.	414

- 26.3. House of Serenos, general view showing ornamental panels and mythological figural scenes, Trimithis (Amheida), Dakhla Oasis, Egypt, secco painting, ca. fourth century. © Excavations at Amheida. Photo: E. S. Bolman. 415
- 26.4. St. Thekla Hearing St. Paul's Sermon, Grotto of St. Paul, Ephesus, Turkey, fresco painting, ca. fifth century. © Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut. Photo: N. Gail. 417
- 26.5. Christ in Majesty above an enthroned Virgin Mary and Christ Child with standing apostles and local saints, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit, Egypt, secco and encaustic painting, ca. sixth century. © E. S. Bolman. Photo: E. S. Bolman. 420
- 27.1. Wall painting, tenth century, detached from a Middle Byzantine house excavated at the Stoa Chortiatis, Thessaloniki, Greece. Wall Painting from Stoa Chortiatis. Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism. 425
- 27.2 (also Color Plate 13B). Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian wearing stavrophoria, ca. 1320. Apse of St. Nicholas Orphanos, Thessaloniki, Greece. Photo: Sharon Gerstel. 426
- 27.3. Archangel Gabriel, 1294/95, in the narthex of the church of the Virgin Peribleptos (today St. Clement), Ohrid, Republic of North Macedonia. Photo: Ivan Drpić. 432
- 27.4. Pantokratōr with surrounding inscription, ca. 1360, in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos, Mystras, Greece. Photo: Sharon Gerstel. 434
- 27.5. Foliate ornament, 1315–1321, in dome in the parekklesion of the Chora Church (Kariye Camii), Istanbul, Turkey. Photo: Sharon Gerstel. 437
- 28.1. Chora Monastery, Istanbul, funerary chapel, painted and gilded sculptural frame for the tomb of Michael Tornikes, ca. 1316–1321. Photo: S. Brooks. 445
- 28.2. Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Phokis, view to the east, eleventh century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY. 451
- 28.3. Trebizond, Monastery of Hagia Sophia, South Porch, 1238–1263. Photo: S. Brooks. 453
- 29.1. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. theol. gr. 31. Fol. 12v. The Story of Jacob, sixth century. Photo: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, by permission. 462

- 29.2. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W530A. Gospels. Mark. Leaf, eleventh century. Photo: Courtesy the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore by permission. 465
- 29.3. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. AcC. 2007.286. The Jaharis Lectionary. Fols. 2v–3r. Beginning of lections for Gospel of John, ca. 1100. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art, by permission. Image source: Art Resource, NY (ART494044). 468
- 29.4. Bibliothèque nationale, MS. gr. 139. Fol. 1v. David Composing the Psalms, tenth century. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, by permission. 469
- 29.5. London, British Library MS 19352. Fol. 3v. David prays to an icon of Christ. Basil of Caesarea preaching (Psalm 4:6 and Psalm 5:3), 1066. Photo: © The British Library Board by permission. 470
- 29.6. Oxford, Bodleian Lib. Barocci 230. Metaphrastian Menologion for September. fol. 3v., eleventh century. Photo: Bodleian Library, by permission. 473
- 29.7. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. BNF gr. 550. *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus*. fol. 49r. Oratio 15 (Homily 5 read on Feast of Maccabees, August 1). The Maccabees in headpiece and initial. Hunting scene, twelfth century. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, by permission. 475
- 30.1 (also Color Plate 15A).  
Hellenic Institute Library, Venice, cod. 5. *Alexander Romance*, fol. 39r: Alexander and Diogenes (lower register). Hellenic Institute, Venezia. 483
- 30.2. Austrian National Library, Vienna, cod. med. Gr. 1. *Dioscorides' "De materia medica,"* fol. 5v: Dioscorides, artist, and personification of *Epinoia* in workshop. Austrian National Library. 486
- 30.3. Vatican Apostolic Library, cod. gr. 1605, Hero of Byzantium *Parangelmata Poliorcetica*, fol. 30v: Battering Rams with operators. © 2018 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. 490
- 31.1. The Water Newton Treasure, likely deposited in the second half of the fourth century. Group image of Water Newton Hoard. The British Museum, London. © Trustees of the British Museum. 498
- 31.2. The Beth Misona Treasure, 6th–7th century. Group image of Beth Misona Treasure. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1950.378–81. 499



- 31.3. Sardonyx chalice (Santuario 69), late tenth–early eleventh century. Sardonyx Chalice of the Apostles. Tesoro di San Marco, Venice, Santuario 69. © Courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice. 506
- 31.4. Liturgical diskos, eleventh–twelfth century. Domschatz, Halberstadt, Inv. no. 36. © Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt, Juraj Lipták. 507
- 31.5. Jasper chalice of Manuel Kantakuzenos, mid-to-late fourteenth century. The Holy Monastery of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos, Greece. Photo courtesy of the Benaki Museum, Athens. Used with permission by the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo: George Poupis. 509
- 31.6 (also Color Plate 11B).  
Patén associated with Thomas Preljubović, second half of fourteenth century. Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo courtesy of the Benaki Museum, Athens. Used with permission by the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo: George Poupis. 510
- 32.1. Plaque with the Enthroned Christ, Byzantine, twelfth–thirteenth century. Copper repoussé, 24.3 × 18 cm, St. Petersburg, The Hermitage, no. x 1038. © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo: Svetlana Suetova, Leonard Kheifets. 517
- 32.2. Part of a templon beam with donor Alexander Tormachos and the Archangel Uriel (from a Deesis) under an arcade. Asia Minor (?), eleventh–twelfth century. Copper repoussé, 17.8 × 20.4 cm; Munich, Collection of Dr. Christian Schmidt, inv. no. 2913. Photodesign Friedrich, Munich, courtesy of Dr. Christian Schmidt. 518
- 32.3. Inscribed icon with a relief representation of St. George, Byzantine, eleventh century. Cast bronze, 7 × 3 cm; Athens, Benaki Museum, Gift of Jacob Hirsch, ΓΕ 11430. © Benaki Museum. 521
- 33.1. Gold cross, sixth–seventh century. Geneva, Musées d’art et d’histoire, acc. no. AD 7489. Quatrefoil-shaped cavity framed by four busts: Christ, the Mother of God, and two angels. Copyright Musées d’art et d’histoire de Genève. 528
- 33.2. Copper alloy amulet, sixth–seventh century. Solomon as triumphant horseman spearing a female demon with the assistance of the angel Araph. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, acc. no. Schlumberger 67. 529
- 33.3. Copper alloy pectoral reliquary cross, eleventh century. Virgin and Child orans. Inscription: M(HTH)P Θ(EO)Υ (Mother of God). Istanbul Archaeological Museums, acc. no. 71.248 (M). 534

- 34.1. The Harbaville Triptych: Deesis and Saints. Byzantine, from Constantinople, tenth century. Ivory, 24 × 28 cm. Musée du Louvre, inv. OA 3247. Photo: Daniel Arnaudet. ©RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY. 544
- 34.2. Veroli Casket (from the cathedral of Veroli near Rome). Byzantine from Constantinople, tenth century. Bellerophon and Pegasus (*left panel*), Story of Iphigenia (*right panel*). Ivory and bone on wood, 11.5 × 40.5 × 15.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Inv.: 216-1865. V & A Images, London/Art Resource, NY. 545
- 34.3. Crucifixion. Late Byzantine, thirteenth century. Steatite, 58 × 46 mm. British Museum, PY 1972, 0701.1 © The Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY. 548
- 35.1. Polychrome Ware bowl with a bird (eleventh century). Benaki Museum, Athens. © Benaki Museum. 555
- 35.2. (*left*) Fine-sgraffito plate with a cheetah chasing a deer (mid- twelfth century). Nea Anchialos Collection, Volos—Greece. © Greek Archaeological Service. (*middle*) Incised-Sgraffito plate with a musician and a dancer (late twelfth century). Palace of the Grand Master, Rhodes, Dodecanese—Greece. © Greek Archaeological Service. (*right*) Champlevé plate with a griffon fighting against an enormous bird (early thirteenth century). Benaki Museum, Athens. © Benaki Museum. 556
- 35.3. Brown and Green Incised-sgraffito bowl with a fish (mid-thirteen century). The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, Cyprus. © Collection of the The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia—Cyprus. 559
- 36.1 (also Color Plate 15B).  
Glass vessels, Thessaloniki, third–fifth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture. 566
- 36.2. Venetian and Islamic glass vessels, Thessaloniki, thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture. 569
- 36.3. Glass bracelets, Rentina, tenth–twelfth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture. 571
- 37.1. Bronze ring with pentagram found in Corinth, Greece. Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. MF 6830. Photo: A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie. 576
- 37.2. *Opus interassile* chain with cross pendant, sixth–seventh century. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, inv. no. O.37809. © Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz. Photo: V. Iserhardt/RGZM. 578

- 37.3. Necklace from the Preslav Treasure Bulgaria, tenth century. Museum “Veliki Preslav,” inv. no. 3381/1. © Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz. Photo: S. Steidl/ RGZM. 580
- 37.4 (also Color Plate 16).  
Detail, Limburg Staurotheke, tenth century, Limburg/Germany, Diocesan Museum. © Diocesan Museum Limburg, Germany. Photo: Michael Benecke. 582
- 37.5. Enamel medallion with St. Kosmas on the frame of the Byzantine icon, thirteenth–fourteenth century, in Freising/Germany, Diocesan Museum. © Diocesan Museum Freiburg, Germany. 583
- 37.6. Gold relief icon with St. Demetrios, twelfth–thirteenth century, Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum. Photo: Karen Bartsch. 584
- 38.1. Sleeve band with Bacchic dancers, a swimmer, and two ducks. Egypt, fourth–seventh century. Natural linen and blue and black wool, tapestry weave. 7.5 × 21 cm. Gift of the Estate of Rose Choron, Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College, New York. 595
- 38.2. Woven silk fragment with part of a scene of a griffin attacking an elephant. Byzantium, tenth–eleventh century. Silk in weft-faced compound twill weave (samite). 28 cm high, 23 cm wide. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. 597
- 38.3. Pontifical stockings of Pope Clement II. Byzantium or Near East, first half of eleventh century. Silk in proto-lampas weave. 58 cm high, 49.4 cm wide at top. Diözesanmuseum, Bamberg. 599
- 38.4. Thessaloniki *Epitaphios*. Byzantine, probably Thessaloniki, early fourteenth century. Embroidery in silver and silver-gilt wire, metal-wrapped thread, and silk on silk ground textile. 72 × 200 cm long. Museum of Byzantine Civilization, Thessaloniki. 602

## COLOR PLATES

---

- 1A. Icon of the Archangel Michael, late tenth century, gems, gold, and cloisonné enamel. Detail of the head; left eye looks down as the candle is raised high. Photo: Bissera V. Pentcheva, © Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice. 1
- 1B. Virgin and Child *Glykophilousa*, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, attributed to Southern Italy or Dalmatian coast. Collection of Dr. Andreas Pittas, Limassol, Cyprus. Photo through courtesy and by permission of Dr. Andreas Pittas. 1

2. Crucifixion with Deesis Surrounded by Saints, ca. 1200. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. 2
- 3A. Amulet, incised hematite and silver mount, 5 × 3.7 × 1 cm, sixth or seventh century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.491, Reproduced from The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection Online Catalog, public domain, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464456/>. 3
- 3B. Lid of the Projecta Casket, with portrait of married couple, three panels with mythological scenes, and one panel with a procession towards the baths. Inscription: SECVNDE ET PROIECTA VIVATIS IN CHRISTO (Secundus and Proiecta, live in Christ). Silver-gilt, h. 28.6 cm, max. l. 56, max. w. 48.8 cm., ca. 380. British Museum, reg. no. 1866, 1229.1. © The Trustees of the British Museum. 3
4. Portrait of Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078–1081) flanked by personified virtues (*above*) and courtiers (*below*), tempera and gold on vellum, 42.5 × 31 cm, Byzantine, Constantinople (Istanbul), ca. 1071–1081. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, ms. Coislin 79, fol. 2r. 4
5. Cathedral of Poreč, mosaics of the main apse and triumphal arch, mid-sixth century. Photo: Renco Kosinozić. 5
- 6A. Portraits of King Lewon, Queen Keran, and children, Queen Keran Gospels, 1272 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate MS 2563, fol. 380). © Courtesy of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. 6
- 6B. Fresco painting of the Last Judgment, Mar Musa el-Habashi, near Nebek, Syria, 1192. Photo: E. C. Dodd. 6
7. Lapsq'aldi Four Gospels, late twelfth century. Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography, Mestia. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze. 7
- 8A. Queen Melisende Psalter, f. 7r, Agony in the Garden. © The British Library Board, Ms. Edgerton 1139. 8
- 8B. Virgin *Arakiotissa*, Church of the Panagia tou Arakos, Lagoudera, Cyprus. By permission of the Holy Metropolis of Morfou. 8
- 9A. Katholikon of the Voroneț Monastery, east exterior. Romania, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries. By Dstefanescu via Wikimedia Commons. 9
- 9B. Last Judgment, katholikon of the Voroneț Monastery, west exterior. Romania, ca. 1550. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons. 9
10. Leo von Klenze. Allerheiligen-Hofkirche, Munich, 1826–1837 (destroyed 1942). Watercolor by Franz Xaver Nachtmann, 1848. 41.6 × 31.1. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Sammlung Graphik/Gemälde, used by permission. 10

- 11A. Paregoretissa, Arta, 1290, exterior from northeast. Photo: Marion Schneider and Christoph Aistleitner/Wikimedia Commons. 11
- 11B. Paten associated with Thomas Preljubović, second half of fourteenth century. Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo courtesy of the Benaki Museum, Athens. Used with permission by the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo: George Poupis. 11
12. Hilandar Monastery, Mt. Athos (Greece), katholikon (completed in 1321), interior of the nave looking east. Furnishing, which is Post-Byzantine, gives the sense of how a complete Byzantine church setting might have looked like. Photo: Nebojša Stanković, 2008. 12
- 13A. San Vitale. Photo: Simon Lane, University of Sussex, used by permission. 13
- 13B. Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian wearing stavrophoria, ca. 1320. Apse of St. Nicholas Orphanos, Thessaloniki, Greece. Photo: Sharon Gerstel. 13
14. Red Monastery Church, view of triconch sanctuary looking upwards toward the east, Sohag, Egypt, secco and encaustic painting, ca. late fifth–sixth century. © American Research Center in Egypt. Photograph: A. Vescovo. 14
- 15A. Hellenic Institute Library, Venice, cod. 5. *Alexander Romance*, fol. 39r: Alexander and Diogenes (lower register). Hellenic Institute, Venezia. 15
- 15B. Glass vessels, Thessaloniki, third– fifth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture. 15
16. Detail, Limburg Staurotheke, tenth century, Limburg/Germany, Diocesan Museum. © Diocesan Museum Limburg, Germany. Photo: Michael Benecke. 16

## ABBREVIATIONS

---

AB	<i>Art Bulletin</i>
AH	<i>Art History</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> .
ArtByzEmp	Mango, C. [1972] 1986. <i>The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453: Sources and Documents</i> (Englewood Cliffs, NJ; reprint Toronto).
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
Byzantium, 330–1453	Cormack, R. and M. Vasilaki, eds. 2008. <i>Byzantium, 330–1453</i> (London). Exhibition catalogue.
<i>Byzantium and Islam</i>	Evans, H. C., and B. Ratliff, eds. 2012. <i>Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition, 7th–9th Century</i> (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
ByzForsch	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CA	<i>Cahiers archéologiques</i>
DChAE	<i>Deltion tēs Christianikēs Archaïologikēs Hetaireias</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>Faith and Power</i>	Evans, H. C., ed. 2004. <i>Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)</i> (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
<i>Glory of Byzantium</i>	Evans, H. C., and W. D. Wixom, eds. 1997. <i>The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261</i> (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
IstMitt	<i>Istanbuler Mitteilungen</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
JSAH	<i>Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians</i>
JWCI	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
OHBS	Jeffreys, E., with J. Haldon and R. Cormack, eds. 2008. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies</i> (Oxford).

- PG* Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. 1857–66. *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, 161 vols. in 166 pts. Paris: Imprimerie catholique.
- REB* *Revue des études byzantines*
- Treasures of Mt. Athos* Karakatsanis, A. A., ed. 1997. *Treasures of Mt. Athos* (Thessaloniki). Exhibition catalogue.

---

# INTRODUCTION

## *“The Artifice of Eternity”*

---

ELLEN C. SCHWARTZ

“... and therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
to the holy city of Byzantium.”

---

## SCOPE AND GOAL OF THE VOLUME

---

“SAILING to Byzantium,” the poem written by William Butler Yeats in 1928 excerpted in the epigraph, is frequently one of the few encounters people have with Byzantium and its spectacular art. One of the jewels of Western Civilization, Byzantine art is an underappreciated field, treated all too often as an adjunct to the arts of the West during the Middle Ages, if considered at all. It is thus to be celebrated that recently a number of resources have been created to point readers to past and current research in this most fertile of fields.

The Byzantine era in the arts can be defined in a number of ways. In this handbook, authors are considering it as art made in the eastern Mediterranean world, including Italy, the Balkans, Russia, and the Near East, between the years 330 and 1453. This coincides largely with the area that saw the development of the Orthodox church, although other faiths were practiced, as demonstrated in the chapters of this handbook. Much of the art was made for religious purposes. Secular pieces were also made. In both cases, the things we refer to as Byzantine art and exhibit in museums were functional objects, created to enhance and beautify the Orthodox liturgy and worship space (books, icons, *patens*, spoons, *flabella*), as well as to serve in a royal or domestic context. Discussions in this volume will consider both aspects of this artistic creation, across a wide swath of geography and a long span of time.



The art of the Byzantine world has been largely confined to the study of specialists and the purview of collectors, as opposed to the medieval art of the Western world, which engaged interest far more widely and much earlier. While students in the United States have often been given a smattering of knowledge about Gothic churches, for example, few have been introduced to any aspects of Byzantine art or culture. The few history textbooks aimed at high school audiences briefly consider only the reign of Justinian and the church of Hagia Sophia. And this is despite the longevity of the Byzantine Empire, the longest-lived empire of the West other than ancient Egypt.

This handbook offers a window into the world of this fascinating and beautiful art.

## THE PURPOSE OF BYZANTINE ART

---

The creation of Byzantine art was in large part to serve the Orthodox faith. The church was seen as the physical symbol or embodiment of God's cosmos, or created world (Demus 1948), the earthly manifestation of the heavenly church. The development of the Byzantine church reflected the growth and codification of the liturgy, with an emphasis on the dramatic entrances, readings, and chants, along with a manipulation of light, sound, and smell. Mosaics and frescoes not only would beautify the church building, but they could serve to illustrate church concepts. This was especially important as most people in this era were illiterate. Icons in the church (and beyond) functioned as a channel of contact with the spiritual realm and its inhabitants, in a more accessible manner than writings and even illuminations in manuscripts that were available only to a few, mostly clergy or those in the monastic realm.

Byzantine artworks exhibited this spiritual mission in portable pieces other than icons, as well. Both Byzantine and Western medieval artworks often function like relics in their ability to connect people with the divine; some become relics in their own right, especially those not made by human agency (such as the *mandylion*). Others enhance relics by protecting, housing, and allowing their display (Bagnoli and Klein 2010). Certain pieces work in similar ways, protecting holy items, like *pyxides*, book covers, etc. These become almost religious elements themselves, much like the sacred things they protect. And contact with holy persons makes some secular objects relics, as seen in the Vatican box with rocks and earth from sacred sites, or the so-called Virgin's girdle. In addition to these portable pieces, Byzantine art, as an architectural enhancement, served often to frame and help exhibit the holy sites that were the goal of pilgrimage, and pilgrimage generated its own arts, much like today's tourist souvenirs (Vikan 2010).

Thus, the audience for Byzantine art was a wide one: the clergy and nobility who commissioned works both secular and religious; people in monastic establishments; lay worshippers among whom there were people of various classes and professions; and both men and, as we are increasingly discovering, women (Herrin 2013).

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD OF BYZANTINE SCHOLARSHIP

---

### Periodicization

Scholars have divided the Byzantine era into several major periods. The Early Byzantine period (Figure I.1) is usually understood as the years before the Iconoclastic Controversy, which began in 726. Some scholars see this as part of the Late Roman era, even referring to Justinian as the last of the Roman emperors. A number question the centrality of Iconoclasm in defining periods, positing other historical events—the loss of lands to Islam or the invasions of Slavs and others into formerly Roman-held territories—as the operative factors in the various changes in culture in Byzantine lands. In this volume, our early section begins at the end of the reign of Constantine the Great, and ends with the end of Iconoclasm in 843.

The Middle Byzantine era (Figure I.2) is generally understood to begin in 843 and end with the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade in 1204; our authors follow this timeline. Some studying this section of time will subdivide it by dynasty (offering concepts such as the “Macedonian Renaissance”); others point to major differences in artistic presentation stressing emotions and dramatic displays of drapery in motion.

The Late Byzantine period (Figure I.3) is usually understood as beginning in 1261 with the reconquest of Constantinople by the Byzantines, and ending in 1453 with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. This leaves the periods of Byzantine satellite states (Epirus, Nicaea, Arta, Trebizond) during the period of the Latin domination to the discretion of individual scholars. Many place these within the Middle Byzantine period, if they are dealt with at all.

The period following the fall of the empire that saw a continuation of Byzantine iconography and style, largely in Orthodox lands, is frequently styled *Byzance après Byzance*. The persistence of these elements in art, spreading to Western Europe as late as the twentieth century, while unnamed as a period, is an era that is gaining interest among scholars (Bullen 2003).

With the exception of the Iconoclastic era, these periods share a number of characteristics in terms of iconographic themes and their treatment, along with vocabularies of ornament, handling of many media, and certain elements of style. Other themes that connect all periods include a lack of knowledge about many artists’ names, and ambiguity about others (for example, Astrapas, Michael, and Euty chius). This sparse documentation inhibits identification and close dating, allowing for speculation about authorship, artists’ workshops, and so on.



FIGURE I.1. Map of sites, Early Byzantine Empire. © Oxford University Press.



FIGURE I.2. Map of sites, Middle Byzantine Empire. © Oxford University Press.



FIGURE I.3. Map of sites, Late Byzantine Empire at different times. © Oxford University Press.

## History and Approaches of Scholarship

### *Early Work*

After the framework was set up to explain different periods, much of the early examination of Byzantine culture involved the presentation of newly discovered works. Whether they were churches with wall paintings, or a piece of portable art such as an incense burner, these writings and presentations introduced the audience to this rarely discussed material and made possible the field we have today. Much of this first work involved exotic places that were described, photographed, and published (Jerphanion 1925; Millet 1954). Portable pieces were brought to readers' awareness through the publication of major royal and museum collections (Volbach 1930). Often, these works introduced artworks not readily available to scholars, such as manuscripts on Mt. Athos that were not available to women and the non-Orthodox. This approach continues as objects, structures, and groups of monuments continue to come to light and as more examination, cataloging, and photographing are done (Pelekanides 1973–1975).

### *Interpretation and Analyses*

This bank of information from early publication allowed scholars to create syntheses of objects and buildings that offered a more comprehensive picture of trends in Byzantine times. Throughout the twentieth century, analysis of monuments, themes, styles, and periods was done, and developments in iconography and style traced. Major formative studies included work on ivories (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934) and evangelist portraits (Friend 1927, 1929), and discussion of the artworks of various eras and how they related (Kitzinger 1977). Scholars crafted thematic works (Corrigan 1992). Case studies have been done more recently; they create a focus around which other objects or types of objects can be understood. These different approaches are echoed in several of the essays in this handbook.

Earlier interpretations and analyses have led to categorizations that themselves have been subject to debate and revision. Older schema of artistic centers, by scholars such as Strzygowski (summarized in Marquand 1910) and Morey (Morey 1929, 1935), for example, have been replaced by more nuanced and data-driven knowledge. Some scientific approaches have involved the use of silver stamps to locate production centers of early Byzantine silver (Dodd 1961), and the close examination of working techniques of masons to link buildings and areas (Ousterhout 1999).

Another theme that has been considered is that of classicism in style. Some scholars have posited a “perennial Hellenism” which operated in Byzantium, continually present although not always dominant, while others have seen recurring times of resurgence as separate “revivals” such as the “Macedonian Renaissance” (Buchthal 1938; Weitzmann 1951; Weitzmann 1960; Wright 1975; Kessler 1988, 168–69).

Yet a third area of disagreement involves the study of Byzantine art outside Constantinople. In this discussion, arguments about the supposed dichotomy of metropolitan/provincial are used to frame understanding, especially when dealing with things located *in situ*, such as architecture or wall painting, or objects with a known provenance

(Wharton 1998). This debate continues around certain periods in particular. Because many Constantinopolitan monuments have been destroyed, Middle Byzantine art is known largely through its “provincial” realizations. Similar considerations obtain in the thirteenth century, when the empire was taken over after the Fourth Crusade. Exiled branches of the imperial family set up empires in Nicaea, Trebizond, Arta, and the Morea; the arts of this time are often studied in their efflorescence in the Morea (Gerstel 2015). The same is true in studies in the regions Obolensky referred to as the “Byzantine Commonwealth,” such as Sicily (Tronzo 1997), Serbia, and Macedonia (Hoddinott 1963; Djurić 1974). Even after the capital was restored, regions such as Romania continued to rely on these traditions into the sixteenth century, and a flourishing industry of the study of *Byzance après Byzance* continues especially in these areas. The debate has often obscured other factors that might be influential: those of class come to mind, an issue that remains a fertile one for further examination. The study of these regions has its potential pitfalls, however; the hijacking of scholarship to political and nationalist influences is a danger often encountered (in older scholarship on Bulgaria, for example: see discussion by Bakalova 2017, 6–7). Work that is balanced and free of political overtones in certain regions is a *desideratum* for future inquiry.

### *Widening Study*

Understanding of Byzantine art has often required study of arts from varied cultures and times. Kessler related iconography, style, and some media such as silver to a continuation of Roman art traditions (Kessler 1988, 166–67). Recent studies explore this relation in the development of the icon (Mathews 2016). Other studies consider the connection broadly, in various Christian arts as well as the art of contemporary Jews, citing the Dura Europos paintings (Brody 2011). As Byzantium preserved many old traditions and the empire covered a vast amount of territory with a multitude of different populations and neighbors, its art naturally became a popular source for much of the medieval art of the Mediterranean world and that of Europe. This can be seen in many areas and across a variety of media: examples include manuscript illumination in Christian cultures such as Armenia, panel paintings in Italy, as well as mosaics in Islamic structures from Jerusalem to Damascus. Byzantine artistic styles and techniques were also amalgamated with Western elements to create a hybrid art style in Crusader states in the Middle East (Buchthal 1957; Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966; Folda 1995), helping to spread elements of Byzantine style further across Western realms. The influence of Byzantine painting on the development of Renaissance art is also of interest, both in Italy (see chapters by Derbes and Neff, Georgopoulou, and Nelson in *Faith and Power*; Folda 2015), and the North (Ainsworth chapter in *Faith and Power*). Work on these cross-currents in medieval art continues; many such issues are treated in the section about neighbors of Byzantium in this volume.

As art historical research opened up to consider art as an expression of a particular community or group within it, a period with specific historical occurrences, and so on, the study of Byzantine art has followed suit. This field, of course, has always dealt with the arts in context—church architecture and decoration, for example, cannot be considered

apart from liturgical concerns. But more and more scholarship is examining the arts as part of the society that created them in new ways. Thoughts about icons as important to women's worship—and why this might be so—can be found in work of historians such as Herrin (Herrin 2013). Gerstel's examination of paintings in rural settings is an important exploration of a class of people as artists, patrons, and consumers who have previously largely been ignored in favor of the study of arts aimed at a metropolitan elite (Gerstel 2015).

As part of this ongoing exploration of Byzantine art, an increasingly wider array of topics is considered in contemporary scholarship, including a number of studies of historiography that trace the course of scholarship over the past decades (*OHBS*, especially 1–20, 59–66). Media heretofore considered outside the pale of serious art are now investigated. Beginning with enamels (Wessel 1968) and bread stamps for Eucharistic offerings (Galavaris 1970), this includes, for example, seals (Nesbit and Oikonomides 1991 and 1994); ceramic vessels and tiles (Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikiou, and Bakirtzi 1999; Gerstel and Lauffenberger [eds.] 2001); and textiles and dress, among other items (Ball 2005; Woodfin 2012). Also of interest are cross-currents among different media used in Byzantium: discovery of the vast trove of icons at the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, for example, encouraged questions as to where and when these pieces were made, and their relationship to manuscripts and other arts (Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966).

One important endeavor is examination of the realm of secular art. In terms of domestic architecture, this has been helped by excavations and new interpretations of sites and finds (Ousterhout 2005). Progress has also been made in the examination of non-religious arts and objects of daily use, in collection (the Menil collection is notable), exhibition (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989; Fowden et. al 2001), and publication with analysis and interpretation (Maguire and Maguire 2007). Patrons for Byzantine monuments and artworks have been uncovered (Buchthal and Belting 1978; Drpić 2014). Obviously, royal patrons are more easily discovered and discussed, although monastic patrons can be intuited. As we move down the socioeconomic ladder, Byzantine patrons become more invisible. Wealthy consumers of art are hinted at in wills and bequests to monasteries (Vryonis 1957; Thomas and Hero 2000), but activities as patrons, if there were any such, are harder to ferret out. Publication of monastic documents should aid in this examination.

### *Newer Approaches*

In the last decades of the twentieth century, several new approaches have emerged, often harnessing techniques from different fields to open up the study of Byzantine art and archaeology. Scientific exploration is a more recent aspect of Byzantine art history that is proving very informative as well as fascinating. Reports from conservators unlocked working methods of Byzantine artists, allowing us to get a sense of how such objects were produced, and helping viewers understand why they look the way they do. Chemical analysis of materials and pigments have offered valuable information about wall paintings and portable objects (Winfield 1968; Cabelli 1982; Epstein 1986; Carr and Morrocco 1991; Lauffenberger, Vogt, and Bouquillon 2001; Klein 2004). Dendrochronology offered tools



for dating (Kuniholm and Striker 1990). Anthropological approaches allowed new insight into monuments (Gerstel 2015), and examination of themes from literature and rhetoric allowed readers original ways of understanding the arts of mid-Byzantine times (H. Maguire 1981). Studies of the sensual reception and reaction of viewers have unlocked some of the experiences we can assume Byzantine visitors must have had confronting icons and attending church (Pentcheva 2006 and Pentcheva 2011). Current ongoing studies involving sound allow reconstruction of a Byzantine worshipper's experience (Lafrance 2016; a number of ongoing studies were discussed in a conference panel, BSC 2015). Finally, a deconstructionist tendency was borrowed from philosophy and literary studies (Peers 2006). These newer approaches offer unexpected methods of inquiry and understanding of Byzantine art. The appeal of the new and modish, however, is sometimes in danger of eclipsing older and important approaches that continue to be valid in the examination of Byzantine culture. All are to be welcomed and encouraged as we continue to explore the lost world of the Byzantine Empire and its arts.

### *Future Exploration*

Additional studies in a number of areas would reveal more about Byzantine life in all its richness. The issue of class has been mentioned, as has the secular realm and its artistic expression. Another subject in need of further work is ornament. As a form of art-making so important to medieval objects, it warrants serious and thorough treatment. Early work on ornament shone a spotlight on manuscripts (Anderson 1979, 170–71); ornament is treated peripherally when wall painting, liturgical silver, icons, and ivories are considered. Studies of Byzantine arts mostly deal with ornament when it suits authors to make particular points, such as the imitation of precious gemmed decoration in more humble copper icons (Schwartz 2014), or the argument for place of manufacture (Pinto Madigan 1987). Ornament is often treated when there is no figural decoration present, such as certain chapels in Cappadocia (Epstein 1977). This issue, too, remains to be more fully considered in the future.

## DISSEMINATION AND DISPLAY

---

### **Publications and Presentations**

Exhibitions and publications play an important role in scholars' and the public's understanding and appreciation of this exquisite art. This is especially important when we consider the inaccessibility of many of these artworks, as well as the ravages time has taken on a number of monuments and objects. Occasionally, documentation via photograph is all we have left, when monuments are damaged or destroyed, especially in areas subject to war (Underwood 1959).

Different kinds of publications continue to open up a variety of ways of dealing with Byzantine art. Books, both monographs and analyses, form one of the main pathways by which scholars share information. Luckily, several presses have committed

themselves to ongoing programs of publication on Byzantine subjects, including Oxford University Press's handbooks, among others. Scholarly journals also offer opportunities for dissemination of information, with some venerable journals dedicated wholly to Byzantine subjects continuing to the present day. Many of these are sponsored by research institutions, especially in Europe. Conferences, local, national, and international, also offer opportunities for the sharing of information on Byzantine subjects. The great success of a number of these in Europe and North America, however, may have served to isolate Byzantinists from other medievalists, depriving each group of useful cross-fertilizing knowledge.

Newer forms of information, representation, and presentation have tremendous potential for both scholarship and teaching. Computerized bibliographic databases and compendia such as JSTOR make worldwide research available to scholars in many places as well as during times of pandemic lockdown. Digitization of archives allows examination of monastic materials that offer documentation of artworks and at least part of their provenance (Thomas and Hero 2000). Digital photography allows for quicker evaluation in the field. Digital images have encouraged swift and easy dissemination, and image-sharing sites such as Artstor and Wikimedia Commons give scholars and teachers access to an enormous bank of materials for research, teaching, and presentation. Often, the manipulation of images can help in close examination at a remove from the actual object. Scholars have been able to create three-dimensional pictures of buildings, along with digital reconstructions. Sound recordings and moving images, thanks to more available and affordable equipment, allow scholars to present a fuller experience to their students and colleagues.

## Issues of Collection and Display

Of course, examination of Byzantine monuments themselves is the most desirable way to encounter this art. A very few museums and galleries are devoted entirely to Byzantine art. These include the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens (the world's first museum dedicated solely to Byzantine art), the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki, and the Skevophylakion at Mt. Sinai. Other museums and libraries with significant Byzantine holdings on display include Dumbarton Oaks and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States, the Benaki Museum in Athens, the British Museum library, and the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, among others. A number of regional or city museums also showcase Byzantine objects found there.

Museums have treated the presentation of Byzantine objects in various ways. Often set in galleries in vitrines or in modern frames against white or neutral walls as if they were easel paintings, these displays—whether permanent or in a temporary exhibition—make these objects easy to see. Sometimes they are placed near objects from different times and places, affecting how we experience them. While this can generate new interpretations, it also can appear as artificial and less than helpful in truly understanding the Byzantine pieces as they were intended to be experienced. It

removes objects from their original context, which is an essential part of understanding how these things worked in the material and spiritual world. The darkened, candlelit interiors of churches, for example, would make wall paintings and icons appear quite different from the way they look in a museum.

So, in exhibiting parts of a permanent collection, some museums have made attempts to recreate the architectural and decorative context of their origin. Some presentations create a believable facsimile using actual Byzantine segments; the reinstalled stone icon screen with the paintings from Episkopi in Eurytania in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens is one such example. Others evoke a church setting through strategic placement of objects against photographic murals. The Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki has several galleries using this technique to give the sense of an early church and one from Late Byzantine times.

In addition to exhibiting items from permanent collections, museums have mounted large exhibitions that have brought Byzantine objects to many different lands and a wide variety of audiences. A number of extensive exhibitions have been created in Europe and North America over the past half-century. These are far from the first public displays of Byzantine art that began with more limited participation in terms of pieces and media, reflecting the state of Byzantine scholarship at the time. One of the earliest was a show of the private holdings of David Talbot Rice at the Royal Scottish Museum in 1958 (Talbot Rice 1958). Much larger comprehensive exhibitions have been held in Europe and the United States, including Athens (*Byzantine Art, a European Art* 1964), Brussels (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1982), Thessaloniki (Fowden et. al 2001), and London (*Byzantine Art, 330-1453*). Exhibitions divided by era were held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York covering the Early Christian period, the Middle Byzantine era, and the time of Late Byzantium (Weitzmann 1979; *Glory of Byzantium; Faith and Power*). While these exhibitions aim at a wide and comprehensive representation, certain thematic groupings are often displayed. Some are dictated by curatorial staff (placing liturgical textiles together), some by exigencies of the objects themselves (manuscripts requiring low lighting; the large corona in *Faith and Power*), and some by the lender(s), such as the Mt. Sinai gallery in the same show.

In addition to these comprehensive shows, others are what Cormack would refer to as an exhibition with “a story,” where the selection, juxtaposition, and display of objects (as well as their labels and any accompanying catalogue) put forth a particular narrative or point of view. The Zappeion exhibition of 1964, for example, had the purpose of setting Byzantine art in connection to wider concerns in art history with its title *Byzantine Art, a European Art*. *Byzantine Hours: Works and Days* offered a view of daily and seasonal life in Byzantine times (Fowden et. al 2001).

Shows have also highlighted Byzantine collections from certain places, such as *Heaven and Earth, Byzantine Art from Greek Collections*. Smaller exhibits limited to specific media, such as *Silver Treasure from Early Byzantium*, Baltimore, 1986, and *From Byzantium to El Greco: Greek Frescoes and Icons*, London 1987, have also been created. Many shows have brought items from far-flung sites, allowing viewers to see many things they might ordinarily never see in person, as they are often in remote locations,

expensive, challenging, and sometimes forbidden to get to for many interested. The exhibition *Treasures of Mt. Athos* was particularly important in this regard. Exhibited at the recently opened Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki in 1997, it offered female viewers and the non-Orthodox visitors an all too rare opportunity to see hundreds of objects from the Holy Mountain that many would never have access to without such an exhibition (*Treasures of Mt. Athos*). These shows, however, bring up issues of appropriate display. Some viewers objected to the showing of these pieces in a museum setting, as they were not created as art objects as we think of art in museums; they are functional, living pieces, essential parts of worship and the lives of the monasteries, churches, and congregations of the Orthodox faithful. Such concerns are not unique to Byzantine pieces: the questions about American tribal holdings in the Smithsonian Institution and First Nations objects in Canadian museums are similarly undergoing examination (Fletcher 2008; Fisher 2012). In addition, exhibitions juxtapose different types of objects, and put things from different periods, purposes, and so on, often together in one space, removing them from the context that helps to give such pieces the depth of meaning they carry.

These exhibits, on the other hand, have served to generate interest in the non-specialist population, which can inspire learning, travel, and cross-cultural contacts and understanding. They have often been financial successes. Further, and just as important, they leave a record in beautifully illustrated catalogues that are important research tools in themselves.

## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

---

The *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Architecture* is aimed at an audience in the early stages of learning about Byzantine culture and its artistic expression. From faculty and teachers in other fields and disciplines, along with graduate students, other professionals concerned with related cultures, to the interested reader, the essays in this volume offer a view into the field of Byzantine art history. It has been put together to showcase various approaches to Byzantine art, in order to be of service both to people with a specific interest, such as creating a class for undergraduates, or to those with a general or focused curiosity about this period and its artistic expression. The first set of chapters, “Approaching Byzantine Art,” treats major themes and issues, including thematic approaches to various subjects. Part II, “Reception of Byzantine Art and Architecture,” considers Byzantine influence on the arts of nearby cultures and its survival after the fall of the empire. Part III, “The Realia of Byzantine Art,” includes discussions of subfields, like architecture and archaeology, and various categories of monuments and diverse media. Areas fully covered in the *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies (OHBS)* are not duplicated in most cases. Each article has a list of references for documentation and further reading. Suggestions for areas in need of future research are also included.

A broad selection of scholars from across the world who are at different stages of their careers, and in different kinds of institutions, have graciously agreed to offer their thoughts on these diverse topics within the study of the arts of Byzantium. Contributors represent many different subfields, and utilize a number of different approaches to scholarship, from wide-ranging surveys to focused studies, from thematic investigations to case studies. A real attempt was made to represent different aspects of scholarship. Authors were selected from all over the Western world, and are at all different stages of their careers—from senior faculty to newly minted PhDs. People working at colleges, in research institutes, and as independent scholars are all included.

To return to where we began, with the Yeats poem: a scholar (who happens to be my husband) has written:

As the poem suggests, Byzantium, and especially its art, has come to stand among some for a kind of enduring legacy and even in its own way an unsurpassed excellence, yet the exact forms that excellence took remains elusive. This book has endeavored to make this Byzantine accomplishment understandable, without diminishing the allure and magic that draws us to it.

It is hoped that readers will find this volume, with its wide-ranging essays and diversity of authors, as interesting and as useful as I have.

## REFERENCES

---

- Ainsworth, M. W. “À la façon grèce”: The Encounter of Northern Renaissance Artists with Byzantine Icons.” In *Faith and Power*, 545-93.
- Anderson, J. C. 1979. “The Illustration of Cod. Sinai. Gr. 339.” *AB* 61, 2: 167-85.
- Athens, Byzantine Museum. [http://www.byzantinemuseum.gr/en/permanentexhibition/byzantine\\_world/wall\\_paintings\\_of\\_a\\_Byzantine\\_church/](http://www.byzantinemuseum.gr/en/permanentexhibition/byzantine_world/wall_paintings_of_a_Byzantine_church/).
- Bagnoli, M., and H. A. Klein, eds. 2010. *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (Cleveland). Exhibition catalogue.
- Bakalova, E. 2017. “Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Bulgarian Art: A Historiographical Survey.” In *Medieval Bulgarian Art and Letters in a Byzantine Context*. Edited by E. Bakalova, M. Dimitrova, and M. A. Johnson, 3-25 (Sofia).
- Ball, Jennifer L. 2005. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth-to-Twelfth-Century Painting* (New York).
- Brody, Lisa R. 2011. *Dura-Europos: Crossroads of Antiquity* (Chestnut Hill, MA). Exhibition catalogue.
- BSC 2015 panel 3-C: Perception and Experience of Byzantine Music in the Liturgy, [http://www.bsna.net/conference/archives/2015/Abstracts\\_2015.pdf](http://www.bsna.net/conference/archives/2015/Abstracts_2015.pdf).
- Buchthal, H. 1938. *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter: A Study in Middle Byzantine Painting* (London).
- Buchthal, H. 1957. *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford and New York).
- Buchthal, H., and H. Belting. 1978. *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy*. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 16 (Washington, DC).

- Bullen, J. B. 2003. *Byzantium Rediscovered* (London).  
*Byzantium 330–1453*.
- Cabelli, D., with T. Mathews. 1982. “The Palette of Khatchatur of Khizan.” *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 40: 37–40.
- Carr, A. W., and L. J. Morrocco. 1991. *A Byzantine Masterpiece Recovered: The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi, Cyprus* (Austin).
- Corrigan, K. 1992. *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge and New York).
- Demus, O. 1948. *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London).
- Derbes, A., and A. Neff. 2004. “Italy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Byzantine Sphere.” In *Faith and Power*, 449–78.
- Djurić, V. 1974. *Vizantijske freske u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade).
- Dodd, E. C. 1961. *Byzantine Silver Stamps* (Washington, DC).
- Drpić, I. 2014. “The Patron’s ‘T’: Art, Selfhood, and the Later Byzantine Dedicatory Epigram.” *Speculum* 89, 4: 895–935.
- Epstein, A. W. 1977. “The ‘Iconoclast’ Churches of Cappadocia.” In *Iconoclasm: Papers Given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, University of Birmingham, March 1975, edited by A. Breyer and J. Herrin, 103–11 (Birmingham).
- Epstein, A. W. 1986. *Tokali Kilise, Tenth-Century Metropolitan Art in Byzantine Cappadocia*. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 22 (Washington, DC); see Appendix I: “The Conservation of the Mural Paintings in the Rock-Cut Churches of Göreme” by P. M. Schwartzbaum, 52–59.  
*Faith and Power*.
- Fisher, D. 2012. “Repatriation Issues in First Nations Heritage Collections.” In *Journal of Integrative Studies* 1, 3. <http://jis.athabascau.ca/index.php/jis/article/view/79/75>.
- Fletcher, K. R. 2008. “The Road to Repatriation: The National Museum of the American Indian Works with Native Tribes to Bring Sacred Artifacts Home Again.” *Smithsonian.com*, September 2008, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-road-to-repatriation-98420522/>.
- Folda, J. 1995. *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge).
- Folda, J. 2015. *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting: The Virgin and Child Hodegetria and the Art of Chrysography* (Cambridge).
- Fowden, E. K., et. al. 2001. *Byzantine Hours: Works and Days in Byzantium: Athens, Thessaloniki, Mystras* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Friend, A. M., Jr. 1927. “Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts.” *Art Studies* 5: 115–47.
- Friend, A. M., Jr. 1929. “Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts.” *Art Studies* 7: 3–29
- Galavaris, G. 1970. *Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Stamps* (Madison, WI).
- Georgopoulou, M. 2004. “Venice and the Byzantine Sphere.” In *Faith and Power*, 489–513.
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 2015. *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology and Ethnography* (New York).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and J. A. Lauffenburger (eds.). 2001. *A Lost Art Rediscovered: The Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium* (Baltimore and University Park, PA).  
*Glory of Byzantium*.

- Goldschmidt, A., and K. Weitzmann. 1934. *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X. bis XIII. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin).
- Greece, Genikē Dieuthynsis Archaiotētōn kai Anastēloseōs; Council of Europe. 1964. *Byzantine Art; a European Art, Zappeion Exhibition Hall, Athens* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Herrin, J. 2013. "Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity." In J. Herrin, *Unrivaled Influence: Woman and Empire in Byzantium*, 38–79 (Princeton).
- Hoddinott, R. F. 1963. *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia: A Study of the Origins and Initial Development of East Christian Art* (London and New York).
- Jerphanion, G. de. 1925–1942. *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantine: les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*. 5 vols. (Paris).
- Kessler, H. L. 1988. "On the State of Medieval Art History." *AB* 70, 2: 166–187.
- Kitzinger, E. 1977. *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art 3rd–7th Century* (Cambridge, MA).
- Klein, H., with R. G. Ousterhout (eds.). 2004. *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration* (New York).
- Kuniholm, P. I., and C. L. Stiker. 1990. "Dendrochronology and the Architectural History of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki." *Architectura: Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Baukunst* 20, 1: 1–26.
- Lafontaine-Dosogne, J. 1982. *Splendeur de Byzance* (Brussels). Exhibition catalogue.
- Lafrance, Adrienne. 2016. "Hearing the Lost Sounds of Antiquity." *The Atlantic*. February 19.
- Lauffenburger, J., C. Vogt, and A. Bouquillon 2001. "Technical Insights into the Working Practices of the Byzantine Tile Maker." In *A Lost Art Rediscovered: The Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel and J. A. Lauffenburger, 67–88 (Baltimore and University Park, PA).
- Maguire, E. D., and H. Maguire. 2007. *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton).
- Maguire, E. D., H. P. Maguire, and M. J. Duncan-Flowers. 1989. *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana). Exhibition catalogue.
- Maguire, H. 1981. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Mango, C. A. 2002. *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford).
- Marquand, A. 1910. "Strzygowski and His Theory of Early Christian Art." *The Harvard Theological Review* III. n.p.
- Mathews, T. F. 2016. *The Dawn of Christian Art in Panel Paintings and Icons* (Los Angeles).
- Millet, G. 1954. *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie (Serbie, Macédonie et Monténégro)*. Album présenté par A. Frolov. 4 vols. (Paris).
- Morey, C. R. 1929. "Notes on East Christian Miniatures." *AB* 11, 1: 53–92.
- Morey, C. R. 1935. *Christian Art* (London, New York, and Toronto).
- Nelson, R. S. "Byzantium and the Rebirth of Art and Learning in Italy and France." In *Faith and Power*, 515–43.
- Nesbitt, J., and N. Oikonomides. 1991. *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and the Fogg Museum of Art*. Vol. 1 (Washington, DC).
- Nesbit, J., and N. Oikonomides. 1994. *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and the Fogg Museum of Art*. Vol. 2 (Washington, DC).
- OHBS.
- Ousterhout, R. 1999. *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Ousterhout, R. 2005. *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia*. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 42 (Washington, DC).

- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D., F. N. Mavrikioy, and Ch. Bakirtzis. 1999. *Byzantine Glazed Pottery in the Benaki Museum* (Athens).
- Peers, G. 2006. *Sacred Shock: Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Pelekanides, S. M. 1973–1975. *The Treasures of Mt. Athos, Illuminated Manuscripts*. 2 vols. (Athens).
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2006. “The Performative Icon.” *AB* 88, 4: 631–655.
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2011. “Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics.” *Gesta* 50, 2: 93–111.
- Pinto Madigan, S. 1987. “The Decoration of Arundel. 547: Some Observations about ‘Metropolitan’ and Provincial Book Illumination in Tenth-Century Byzantium.” *Byzantion* 57, 2: 336–359.
- Schwartz, E. C. 2014. “Copper Repoussé Icons of Middle and Later Byzantine Times.” *DChAE*, Series 4, vol. 35, 361–74.
- Sinai Monastery. <https://www.sinaimonastery.com/index.php/en/>
- Talbot Rice, D. 1958. *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art. [Catalogue of Exhibits], Sponsored by the Edinburgh Festival Society in Association with the Royal Scottish Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Edinburgh). Exhibition catalogue.
- Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Culture. <http://mbp.gr/en/permanent-exhibition>.
- Thomas, J., and A. C. Hero, eds. 2000. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders’ Typika and Testaments* (Washington, DC).
- Treasures of Mount Athos*.
- Tronzo, W. 1997. *The Cultures of His Kingdom: Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton).
- Underwood, P. A. 1959. “The Evidence of Restorations in the Sanctuary Mosaics of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea.” *DOP* 13: 235–43.
- Vikan, G. 2010. 982. *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*. Rev. ed. (Washington, DC).
- Vryonis, Jr., S. 1957. “The Will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathius Boilas (1059).” *DOP* 11: 263–77.
- Volbach, F. 1930. *Mittelalterliche Bildwerke aus Italien und Byzanz* (Berlin).
- Weitzmann, K. 1951. *The Fresco Cycle of S. Maria di Castelseprio* (Princeton).
- Weitzmann, K. 1960. “The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Their Impact on Christian Iconography.” *DOP* 14: 43–68.
- Weitzmann, K. 1963. “Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons of Mt. Sinai.” *AB* 45, 3: 179–203.
- Weitzmann, K. 1966. “Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom.” *DOP* 20: 49–83.
- Weitzmann, K. 1979. *Age of Spirituality, Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
- Wessel, K. 1968. *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century* (New York).
- Wharton, A. J. 1998. *Art of Empire. Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery: A Comparative Study of Four Provinces* (University Park, PA, and London).
- Winfield, D. C. 1968. “Middle and Later Byzantine Wall Painting Methods: A Comparative Study.” *DOP* 22: 61–139.
- Woodfin, W. T. 2012. *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford and New York).
- Wright, D. H. 1975. “The Shape of the Seventh Century in Byzantine Art.” In *Abstracts of the First Annual Byzantine Studies Conference*, Cleveland, OH, 24–25 October, 9–28. [http://www.bsana.net/conference/archives/1975/abstracts\\_1975.pdf](http://www.bsana.net/conference/archives/1975/abstracts_1975.pdf).





PART ONE

---

APPROACHING  
BYZANTINE ART

---



## CHAPTER 1

---

# THE ORIGIN OF ICONS

---

THOMAS F. MATHEWS

## INTRODUCTION

---

In recent research I have examined issues relating to that momentous transition in which the gods of the ancient Mediterranean were replaced in panel paintings and in religious practice with an array of Christian “divinities” (Mathews 2016). By “panel paintings,” I refer to the ancient genre that employed wood as its support, whereas “icons” specify panel paintings of religious subjects intended for use in Christian rites.

With coauthor Norman E. Muller, conservator of paintings at the Princeton University Art Museum, I posed the question of the place of Christian icons in the panorama of the history of art. It had been assumed that icons derived from Egyptian mummy portraits in encaustic or wax, and that it was Cimabue in the 1280s who had introduced egg tempera. However, in our project Muller had the opportunity to test this story in the laboratory analyzing pigments in eleven Egyptian paintings of the second century CE, which revealed not a trace of wax, but rather egg yolk tempera.

The evidence Muller and I studied, in spite of its Egyptian provenance, is overwhelmingly Greek. The panels are Greek in style, in materials, in composition, and in painting methods. The language too, in Egypt’s Fayyum under Roman rule, was Greek. The dedicatory inscriptions were in Greek, especially the very common “*ep’agathō*,” or “for a benefit.” Further, the religious ritual itself of employing paintings as “votive” or thank offerings was a Greek practice. Thus icons belonged not to the world of mummies, but to the world of Hellenistic art, the world of Apelles and Zeuxis. And the use of egg tempera in Egyptian panel paintings is fully a thousand years earlier than its use in the Italian Renaissance.

Reinforcing the material evidence are important literary sources. Already in the second century, we have three independent literary accounts—two in Irenaeus and one in the Acts of John—that describe icons employed in Christian rites, in Rome, Asia Minor, and Egypt, some 500 years earlier than the earliest icons discussed by Brubaker and Haldon (Brubaker and Haldon 2011). These icons are not portraits nor are they

history paintings; they are religious paintings in the full sense of the term, employed in cultic practices. Other neglected documents in inscriptions, poetry, hymns, and stories amplify and explain the religious uses of icons; by the sixth century, in Constantinople, the icon cult reached a dramatic milestone in their placement on chancel screens around the altar.

Although Late Antique painting is often presented as the last gasp of a moribund Classical art, it should rather be seen as a period of radical innovations that affected art through the Renaissance (Mathews 1993). In iconography, these innovations include a wholesale syncretism of the ancient gods, which identified the Egyptian divinities with their Greek and then with their Christian counterparts. A second innovation of this period's painting is its rejection of the Classical illusionary structures of perspective and shading in favor of a new luminescence by introducing reflective materials into the paintings—gold, silver, glass, and mosaic. More important, we notice the introduction of three new picture templates: the folding triptych, the hierarchic registers, and the largest template of all, the *templon* barrier of the sanctuary itself, hung with dozens of icons.

All of these phenomena manifest the powerful impact of Christian patronage, a patronage that developed from within the ancient rite of “votive” offerings. The largest, the most expensive, the most innovative, and the most influential commissions of Late Antiquity in fact happen to be Christian paintings. This period abandons the mimetic goals of painting, in favor of a pursuit of visionary possibilities in representing the unseen divine world. The enlarged dimensions of the new art, both physically and conceptually, have been dramatically demonstrated in Bolman's historic discovery of the murals of the sixth-century Red Monastery near Sohag on the Nile, the grandest preserved painted interior of this era (Bolman 2016).

## SYNCRETISM

---

To understand the formalities of Christian icons it is essential to start with their pagan precedents. The single most important panel painting of antiquity is the *Septimius Severus and Family*, purchased in Egypt in 1932 by the Antikensammlung of Berlin. Excluded from Rondot's survey as being non-Egyptian, simply a Roman portrait (Rondot 2013), this work is thoroughly Egyptian and profoundly religious in three ways: first, its iconography identifies the emperor with Serapis, the ancient god of fertility and rebirth. Second, it is a temple offering designated as *anathema* “untouchably holy” (papyrus Oxy.1449). The term derives from the Greek verb “*anatithemi*,” meaning “I dedicate, or I make an offering of something”; the presentation of an icon in church marked its dedication, referred to in the Second Council of Nicaea of 787 CE, precisely by this term. And third, it redefines the pantheon by the eradication of the younger divine prince Geta who was executed by his brother.

Presently a tondo, 31 cm in diameter, it shows Lucius Septimius Severus, accompanied by his wife, Julia Domna. The painting represents the dynastic ambition of the emperor by the inclusion of his sons Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Caracalla, and Lucius Septimius Geta (erased). Just ten and nine years old respectively, they were designated Augustus and Caesar in 198 CE. The occasion of the painting was the triumphal family visit to Egypt, in September of the following year. When Septimius Severus fell in York in 211 CE, Caracalla was on hand to succeed him.

A later phase of this painting is marked by the scandalous erasure of Geta, dated to Caracalla's second visit to Egypt from November 215 to the beginning of 216, when the emperor distinguished himself by his temple building and by his inexplicably savage massacre of civilian youth. The painting is thus a religious image dedicated twice, first by the father and later by the son.

The theological term "syncretism" is important in understanding the spiritual dimension that is essential to Late Antique art. The common Greek word "*kerannumi*" refers to mixing or blending ingredients, most frequently the diluting of wine with water, but in theology it is the correct term for the sharing of properties among the "divinities," whether pagan or Christian. This is most strikingly illustrated by a panel depicting Harpocrates-Dionysus in the Cairo Egyptian Museum. The god's right index finger to his lips identifies him as the child Horus, also called Harpocrates, who in myth is the child of Isis and Serapis and founder and protector of the royal Pharaonic line. In his left hand, however, he makes the very non-Egyptian gesture of grasping a large bunch of ripe grapes. This makes him Dionysus, a Greek god of Thracian origin, the god of the vine and horticulture. Alexandrian theologians saw the affinity of the two gods and proposed their syncretism, so that the "combination god" could be worshipped as one dynamic deity. In the Cairo panel the worship is further blended with the cult of Sothis, the dog-star Sirius. The coincidence of his rising with the start of the solar year in 139 CE was carefully noted by the astronomers of Alexandria and celebrated by the priests with the issuance of a special coin.

Syncretism also allowed the theologians of Alexandria to identify gods with the emperors of planet earth. McCann explains the divine connotations of Septimius Severus' iconography, the separate "cork-screw" curls hanging over his forehead and his medium-length divided beard, which were copied from cult statues of Serapis in Alexandria (McCann 1968). The primary reason behind Septimius Severus' Egyptian tour was said to be *propter religionem dei Sarapidis*, "for the worship of the god Serapis." The emperor was on a religious pilgrimage, and this explains his dress, the toga of the Roman citizen enriched with gold trim.

Thus there existed in pre-Christian antiquity a class of panel paintings that were set apart for religious use, and they are the direct precedents of Christian icons. The term *anathema* is used in the papyrus Oxy. 1449, designating an offering of religious cult. This papyrus is a list of properties offered in six minor temples in the vicinity of Oxyrhynchus—so minor indeed that they are otherwise totally unknown (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 1916, 134-136). The religious custom of such offerings is Greek, one of the commonest religious practices of antiquity and fundamental to Christian icon use.

According to Greek and Roman law, if one deposited an offering for the god in a temple, it became legally the property of that god, and the temple staff had to record it and carefully preserve it. Every year, moreover, the temple staff were expected to confirm and update their records; Oxy. 1449 is such an updating. Imperial portrait panels were not hung in the public square for veneration, nor were they intended for a “private domestic chapel,” as Nowicka proposed (Nowicka 1993); these were temple property. By placing an offering in the treasury of the temple, the dedicant absolved himself of a debt to the god, and the object offered acquired a sacred status. Oxy. 1449 is a composite list of offerings in several temples, and for each temple the first item listed is the “little painting,” or *eikonidion*, of Caracalla and his parents. The term *eikonidion* is significant for its next known use is in a Christian papyrus of the seventh century where it designates an icon of the Mother of God with St. Kollouthos, both haloed in gold. Thus, the term worked just as well for Christian subjects as for pagan.

In the Oxyrhynchus document the repeated priority of Caracalla indicates that the occasion for this revision of the list was precisely the repeated offerings of his portrait (not his father’s), in which he appears in syncretism with the god of resurrection. The full extent of this syncretism is simply staggering. According to the distinguished papyrologist Bagnall, if the commissioning of imperial portraits in these nine minor temples was carried out the length of the Nile, as it is reasonable to expect, it would have amounted to about four thousand paintings (Bagnall 2009). In other words, there were plausibly thousands of examples denoting the syncretism of the Roman emperor with the Egyptian god Serapis.

## THE TRIPTYCH

---

Serapis appears again in our corpus with his consort Isis on a pair of pintle-hinged door panels in the J. Paul Getty Museum, which introduce another important innovation of Late Antique painting, the triptych. The museum itself has always insisted on reconstructing the panels as triptych doors, proposing for the central panel an anonymous Egyptian gentleman whose portrait was purchased at the same time (1974). Muller’s careful measurements, however, demonstrate that the size of the doors and their trapezoidal shape preclude their use in an actual triptych, for they would not fit. Without the benefit of Muller’s measurements, Parlasca suggested some time ago that they were the doors of a little temple-shaped, portable shrine, whose sloping sides were intended to imitate actual temple architecture (Parlasca 2000). Egyptologists term shrines of this sort *naos/naiskos*, and this satisfies the archaeological data and at the same time offers us the immediate antecedent for the true triptych. When the Getty naos doors were closed to mortals, the gods painted on the interior would cast each other a sidelong glance of divine communion. When the shrine was opened for cultic use it literally gave birth to their child, which would have been a statuette that was physically removed during veneration. This is illustrated in our reconstruction drawings, in which

we replaced the missing statuette with a handsome bronze one, inlaid with silver, from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. With the opening of the naos shrine, the two parents turned their glance from one another, to the child between them. The shrine was an “activated icon,” literally a “motion picture.” It was not a static portrait, for by opening and closing the doors you could see one god melting into another or interacting with another. If then one were to replace the central sculptural element of the naos shrine with a two-dimensional painting, one would witness the formation of one of the commonest picture templates of Late Antiquity, the true triptych.

The three-part folding icon is a new invention. In Early Christian art, statuettes of sacred figures, such as those carried about in the Egyptian naos shrine, play no role whatever. Christians preferred two-dimensional paintings, and the Sinai collection in Egypt has numerous pintle-hinged doors that have come detached from their triptych center panels (Weitzmann 1976). Triptych paintings were a way of theologizing to explore the implications of syncretism. Already in the second century, Irenaeus was familiar with a joining of Jupiter-Christ, of which the catacombs present examples. The triptych continues down the centuries with great success.

## THE CULT OF MARY

---

Mary with the Christ-Child, the most popular subject in Western art, must be seen as a syncretism of Isis with her child Harpocrates. Modern scholarship has tried to connect the cult of Mary to abstract and abstruse Christian dogma, crediting the introduction of the Marian cult to the bishops gathered at Ephesus in 431 CE who introduced the title of *theotokos* or “Mother of God” as they tried to explain the unity of natures in Christ. This theological explanation has recently been given a new twist by Pentcheva, who attributes the growth of Marian devotion to the success of her icon in the military defense of Constantinople (Pentcheva 2010). She has invented a succinct formula in which Mary embodied power rather than maternal tenderness. Contrary to this interpretation, Mary’s iconography never included any military attributes.

Neither does public veneration of Mary start with the Council of Ephesus, a common mistake of art historians and theologians alike. Re-examining the Gospel of Luke, theologians McGuckin and Maunder demonstrated that the gospel borrowed from a well-established Christian liturgy a litany of repeated invocations of “Blessed are you” extolling Mary’s fertility (McGuckin 2008). The invention of the Marian cult was not the work of celibate clergy searching for terms for the mystery of the Incarnation, but the work of women, whose concerns were of an entirely different nature. They were the pressing and intimate female concerns of conception, birthing, lactation, and child-rearing. These female concerns were also very important in the cult of Isis and Hathor, Aphrodite and Artemis, not to mention Harpocrates and Dionysus.

It is often remarked that when Mary was given the title *theotokos* in 431, it was already in wide use for Isis. The many fertility images from the shrine of Abu Minas just



outside Alexandria must be counted among the earliest images of Mary, their Christian character guaranteed by their find spot in the very popular Christian shrine and by their unique haloes. In these repeated images, the woman's gesture to her swelling belly should be interpreted as an invocation of the blessing of Mary's miraculous pregnancy, as recounted in Matthew, Luke, and the Protevangelium of James (Egypt, second century).

The earliest surviving wood panel icon of Mary is a pregnancy image, the Louvre's Annunciation icon, dated by Rutschovscaya to the fifth century (Rutschovscaya 2000). The foot of Gabriel appears in the lower right-hand corner, for this is the very moment of Mary's miraculous conception. Mary is depicted wearing the *maphorion*. This word is the diminutive of the Greek for veil *maphortes*, meaning "little veil." It was a common article of women's attire in the portraiture of the wealthy women of Palmyra, and it may have been familiar in nearby Galilee in the first century CE. The maphorion was regularized in Mary's iconography with the erection of the Shrine of the Veil by the emperor Leo I in 473. It is interesting that the veil is almost totally absent from the Egyptian mummy portraits of the same period, and when assigned to Mary it may have been a Syrian or Jewish fashion; it became Mary's identifying sign, the way the solar disc had identified Isis. This was inserted into the iconography in the fifth century Blachernai mosaic (473), which was, as Mango noted, the earliest image showing an emperor prostrate in adoration before an image of Christ, who was shown as child in the arms of his seated mother (Mango 1998, 70).

It should be noticed that early representations of Mary show her with a stool rather than a throne. While a regal throne for Mary has biblical authority in Luke 1:32, in which Mary's Child is said to inherit through her "the throne of his father David," the jeweled Pharaonic throne seen first at Sta. Maria Maggiore is borrowed from the Late Antique Isis. Another instance of syncretism is seen in the iconography of Mary nursing her Child. This was an activity for the privacy of women's quarters, not for exhibition in public, and it was unthinkable that a woman would have her portrait painted doing so. This motif is not intended as a portrait motif but as a joining of Mary with the divine Isis nursing Harpocrates.

## ICONS ON THE TEMPLON SCREEN AND EARLY ICONOGRAPHY

---

In the course of the sixth century, icons went from being single, separate offerings to an assembly on the templon barrier around the altar. The evidence of this "icon architecture" in three churches of Constantinople is a major contribution of British archaeologists and a turning point in the history of icons, largely ignored. St. Artemios survives only in its literary source of the saint's life, dated before 668 (but very likely mid-sixth century). According to Mango (Mango 1979), the Life of Artemios gives us

the earliest example of the term *templon* for the sanctuary barrier. The coinage of this new term from the Latin *templum* implies that the place of the offering of the bread and wine of the Eucharist had at this time become an architectural unit in its own right, a church within the church. Adorned with icons and lights and perfumed with incense, it required a name of its own.

The earliest physical remains of a Constantinople *templon* are the elements of a marble icon screen at the church of the martyr St. Polyeuktos, 520–527 (Mango and Sevckenko 1961). They were discovered in the 1960s by Firatli and Harrison and photographed by the latter's wife Elizabeth (Harrison 1986). The surviving ten relief icons (some of them partial) of Christ, his Mother, and the Apostles were surrounded by as many as thirty fragmented sculptures (Harrison 1986; Harrison 1989) of peacocks displaying their tails around a grand elevated ambo platform for the singers (Jewell's estimate; Jewell 2015). Although the Polyeuktos icons are the best surviving early chancel icons, by some perversity of archaeology they are generally omitted from the literature on icons, with the exception of Lowden's treatment (Lowden 1997). Harrison proposed dating the panels to the sixth-century erection of the church, and McKenzie has concurred (Harrison 1986; Harrison 1989; Lowden 1997; McKenzie 2007).

Closely related to the Polyeuktos *templon* was the *templon* screen of Hagia Sophia (562). Though pillaged by the Crusaders for its silver in 1204, its location was traced by Mainstone (Mainstone 1988). The poetic description in Paul the Silentiary informs us that the icons were "covered with silver . . . upon which the tool wielded by a skilled hand has artfully hollowed out discs more pointed than a circle within which it has engraved the figure of the immaculate God who, without seed, clothed himself in human form . . . and a host of winged angels bowing down their necks..." (*ArtByzEmp*, 87). The message of these sanctuary icons was not the exegesis of specific dogmas so much as the orthodoxy of the hierarchy whose prototypes they displayed. The icons of Christ and his Apostles authenticated the message that the actual clergy were announcing as they explained the Scriptures and celebrated the Eucharist. The authenticity of the Church's teaching was guaranteed by the authenticity of the icons.

The icon program at St. Polyeuktos and Hagia Sophia may be contrasted with the more rudimentary organization of pagan images in the clerestory of the Chapel of the Syncretic Gods in Karanis, from the fourth century CE. Whereas Karanis offered the worshipper a kind of pantheon of pairs of gods, Isis and Serapis, Demeter and Kore, the early churches featured a much larger and complex program.

In spite of the fragmentary state of the remains, the principal message of the *templon* is unavoidable. Its organization at St. Polyeuktos and Hagia Sophia was based on the large unit of the twelve Apostles grouped on either side of Christ, as in Rome at Sta. Pudenziana (410 CE). In the churches of the capital, Christ appeared twice, once as the Child in his Mother's lap and again as Christ Pantokratōr with a gesture of blessing. Angels and prophets amplified the theme. Furthermore, at St. Polyeuktos, the Apostles are given the exaggerated ears seen often on Egyptian gods, to show them as attentive listeners. They were expressly designed to be prayed and sung to, and, etymologically, the name *Polyeuktos* means "the much-invoked one."

It should also be noticed that each of the panels has a square hole in the lower center to hold a bronze lamp fixture. The devout worshippers lit lamps to “activate” the images and the oil was itself a cultic offering. The violent removal of the fixtures, most likely during the surge of Iconoclasm under Constantine V (r. 741–775), split the marble panels in half to suppress this cultic gesture. The dramatic rite of the lighting of lamps, described by Paul the Silentiary, is continued even today in the Divine Liturgy at the *lucenarium* of Sunday Vespers, in the Orthodox, the Catholic, and the Anglican observances. The original hymn for the lighting of the lamps is still in use, *O Phōs Hilaron, Oh Joyous Light*, a trinitarian hymn, one of the very earliest surviving Christian hymns.

## FOR THE FUTURE

---

Investigation of this crucial art form, the icon, needs to be continued. There is much more to be studied in regard to icons, including their sources and cultic uses, as well as research based both on textual and material evidence.

## REFERENCES

---

*ArtByzEmp*.

Bagnall, R. S., ed. 2009. *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Oxford).

Bolman, E. S., ed. 2016. *The Red Monastery Church: Beauty and Asceticism in Upper Egypt* (New Haven, CT).

Brubaker, L., and J. Haldon. 2011. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850): A History* (Cambridge).

Harrison, R. M. 1986. *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul. Vol. 1, The Excavations, Structures, Architectural Decoration, Small Finds, Coins, Bones, and Molluscs* (Princeton).

Harrison, R. M. 1989. *A Temple for Byzantium: The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana's Palace-Church in Istanbul* (Austin, TX).

Jewell, K. 2015. “Peacocks and the Display of Power in Late Antiquity.” In *Byzantine Studies Conference 2015*, New York, Oct. 22–25: *Abstracts*, 51 (New York).

Lowden, J. 1997. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London).

McCann, A. M. 1968. *The Portraits of Septimius Severus, AD 193–211* (Rome).

McGuckin, J. A. 2008. “The Early Cult of Mary and Inter-Religious Contexts in the Fifth-Century Church.” 2008. In *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, edited by C. Maunder, 1–22 (London and New York).

McKenzie, J. 2007. *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 BC–AD 700* (New Haven, CT).

Mainstone, R. J. 1988. *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (London).

*ArtByzEmp*.

Mango, C. 1979. “On the History of the Templon and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople.” *Zograf* 10: 40–43.

- Mango, C. 1998. "The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople." In *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae*, Split-Porec, 25.9–1.10 1994, edited by N. Cambi and E. Marin, vol. 2, 61–76 (Vatican City).
- Mango, C., and I. Sevcenco. 1961. "Remains of the Church of St. Polyeuktos at Constantinople." *DOP* 15: 243–47.
- Mathews, T. F. 1993. *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton).
- Mathews, T. F. 2016. *The Dawn of Christian Art in Panel Paintings and Icons* (Los Angeles).
- Nowicka, M. 1993. *Le portrait dans la peinture antique*. Trans. Z. Kiss (Warsaw).
- The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. 1916. Part XII, edited by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (London).
- Parlasca, K. 2000. "Eine sepulkrale Schreintür römischer Zeit aus Ägypten." In *Les civilisations du bassin Méditerranéen: Hommages à Joachim Sliwa*, edited by K. M. Ciałowicz and J. A. Ostrowski, 293–98 (Krakow).
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2010. *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Rondot, V. 2013. *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte: Iconographies, panthéons et cultes dans le Fayoum hellénisé des IIe–IIIe siècles de notre ère* (Paris).
- Rutschowskaya, M. 2000. "Relief of the Virgin of the Annunciation." In *The Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by M. Vassilaki, 270–71 (Athens).
- Weitzmann, K. 1976. *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons*. Vol. I, *From the Sixth to the Tenth Century* (Princeton).



## CHAPTER 2

---

# BYZANTINE ART AND PERCEPTION

---

BISSERA V. PENTCHEVA

## INTRODUCTION

---

IN 1989, Leslie Brubaker published an article addressing the question of the Byzantine perception of images after Iconoclasm. She detected in the texts, especially the *Life of the Patriarch Tarasius* written between 843 and 847, an articulation of the spectators' emotional response to the images (Brubaker 1989, *Vita Tarasii* 1891 [Efthymiadis 1998]). She contrasted this ninth-century trend of emphasizing the imagined feeling of the audience as opposed to that of the martyr/protagonist to patristic writings of the fourth century, where emotion is explored in the main character or the author, but not in the listeners. Brubaker concluded that art after Iconoclasm addressed a beholder ready to seek a deeper emotional engagement with the icon. According to her, it was not the iconography of the images but the audience's response to them that had changed: "Byzantine perception of art seems, then, increasingly an emotional response, based not on what is seen, but on what is imagined" (Brubaker 1989).

Imagination, or *phantasia*, is the faculty that aids the emotional response of the spectator, and it is activated through dreams, material images, and language. Theodore Stoudites (759–826) states that the imagination and the physical image are reciprocal when transmitting resemblance. A causal relationship exists between the two; the *phantasia* conceives and the product of this conception is the physical image. Dreams, also part of the realm of *phantasia*, similarly operate between the celestial and terrestrial spheres, as examples (*hypodeigmata*) and shadows (*skiai*) of the heavenly realm. Once exteriorized in the physical image, these images issuing from dreams could direct our minds back to the metaphysical. Mediated further through the use of vivid language, this encounter with the physical image could move the beholder to an emotional response (Theodore Stoudites, *Letter to His Brother Naukratios*).

Theodore's conceptualization of imagination draws on the received tradition of Aristotle, Stoic philosophy, and rhetoric (Webb 2009, 107–30). According to these sources, the imagination consists of both imprints of sense perception stored in their pictorial form in memory (*aisthēmata* and *katalēptikai phantasiai*), as well as the fictional images of non-material entities (*phantasmata*) (Diogenes Laertios, *Vita philosophorum*, 7.49–50; Webb 2009, 116). *Ekphrasis* (the art of vivid writing) can activate these stored images, some of which derive from sensual encounter with the material world. Stimulated and aroused by language, these *phantasmata* and *phantasiai* could enable listeners to imagine themselves as spectators of the narrated events. Successful *ekphrasis* targets not the description of the thing itself but the act of its sensual apprehension (Webb 2009, 127–28).

Scholarship on *ekphrasis* has pointed to the discursive nature (*logos*) of the performed text and the object/building/event; *logos* stems from a particular social and ethical position (*ēthos*) and can produce an affective response (*pathos*) (Maguire 1981; Webb and James 1991; Webb 2009; Limberis 2011; Elsner 2014). Grouping text and image under *logos* tends to ignore the non-discursive, material aspect of the image (Roberts 1989; Cox Miller 2009; Bynum 2011); it is manifested in the phenomena of incandescence, shadow, and glitter (James 1995; Franses 2003; Pentcheva 2006; Pentcheva 2009; Pentcheva 2010; Pentcheva 2011; Peers 2013; Peers 2015; Betancourt 2016b; Pentcheva 2016a; Pentcheva 2017). They are expression of how art operates beyond *logos* in a temporal and sensorial domain. It is also this sensual saturation produced by the visual among other stimuli that medieval exegesis and mystagogy (interpretation of the liturgy) target and interpret as the presence of the metaphysical in the material. Thus the ephemerality of the visual *poikilia/varietas* (changing appearances) renders the divine sensorially present and freed from the semantics of human speech and visual anthropomorphic figuration (Pentcheva 2017).

There is a gap between the Byzantine conceptualization of the imagination and the received ancient tradition of Aristotle, the Stoics, and rhetoric. What escapes our notice as we draw on the ancient sources in order to elucidate the medieval process of imagination is that the ancients privileged verisimilitude, while the Christians concerned themselves less so with mimesis and more with the detection of the presence of *pneuma* in matter (Webb 1999; Pentcheva 2011; Pentcheva 2017; Webb 2017). In medieval *ekphrasis*, the imprint (*typōsis*) of sense perceptions functions not with the expressed purpose of sustaining likeness, but to record the temporal incarnation of spirit in matter. The Byzantine perception of art and architecture was borne out of this interaction of visible form, visual shifts of appearance, and imagined images. To encounter glitter and variability of form (*poikilia*) is to recognize in these temporal phenomena the fugitive overshadowing of *pneuma* (Pentcheva 2017). This essay looks at two instances of such manifestation of *poikilia*: the sixth-century *ambo* of the Great Church and the tenth-century icon of Archangel Michael. In between the two, the analysis addresses a third example—the mosaic of the Mother and Child in Hagia Sophia and its Byzantine *ekphrasis*. In this instance, text and image self-consciously move away from form and *poikilia* to conjure an imagined image in one's mind.

## THE AMBO OF HAGIA SOPHIA

The ambo was an oval structure raised on eight columns. It presided over the space beneath the main dome of Hagia Sophia (Figure 2.1).

This luminous nave was characterized by the sixth-century poet and courtier Paul the Silentiary as the *kallichoros*, or the “beautiful performance space” (Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio S. Sophiae*, vv. 546, 902). Set in it, the platform was made of onyx slabs. This stone could change appearance and become lambent when the rays of the rising sun, coming through the many windows of the sanctuary on the east end, instilled the stone of the ambo with energy and splendor. As the platform for both recitation and chant, the ambo ingathered the human word and the divine Logos, material and spiritual, terrestrial and celestial. Paul’s ekphrasis aims to reveal this special capacity of the ambo in binding incommensurables. The poetry does that by addressing the phenomenon of *poikilia* (material flux). Paul uses language to stimulate in his audience’s imagination specific images associated with vibrant matter:

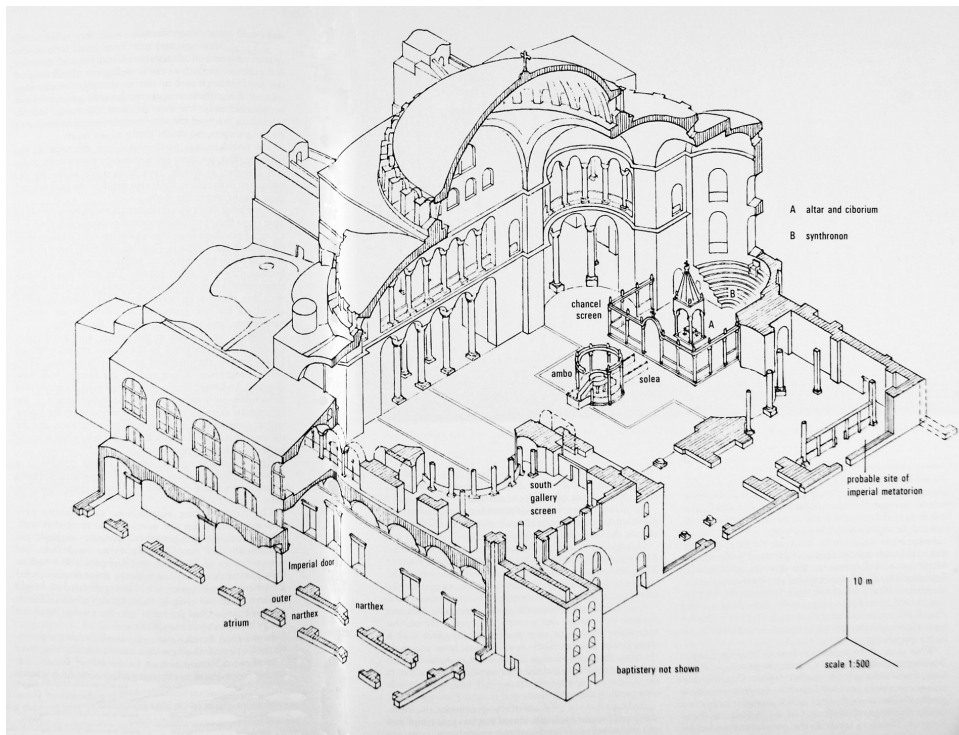


FIGURE 2.1. Hagia Sophia, 537 CE, axonometric drawing of the interior. From R. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure, and Liturgy of Justinian’s Great Church* (London: 1988), fig. 252. Reproduced with the permission of Mainstone.



and thanks to its changeful form, [the stone] glistens in a variety of modes,  
 on its surface revolve transparent figures like eddying whirlpools,  
 in some places resembling the infinity of circles,  
 in others they stray from the circle into helical shapes.  
 In some places [the stone] is seen ruddy mingled with pallor,  
 or the fair brightness of human fingernails;  
 in other places the brilliance turns into a soft woolly whiteness,  
 gently staying or imitating the sheen of yellow boxwood,  
 or the lovely image of beeswax,  
 which men oftentimes wash in clear mountain streams  
 and lay out to dry under the sun's rays;  
 it turns silver-shining without completely altering its color,  
 showing traces of gold.  
 (Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio ambonis*, vv. 80–92)

From the start, the description does not engage the essence and form of the platform but rather the changing appearance of its stone. Already, the first line characterizes the polymorphy of the onyx with the adjective *aiolomorphos* and the verb *poikillō*; it is shifting, producing a variety of appearances through *aiglē*, “radiance, gleam, and splendor.” Next, Paul introduces a series of moving phenomena—the transparent figures of whirlpools, which continually transmute their geometry from circles to helixes. By insisting on the variety of appearances passing across the surface of the onyx, Paul imbues the ambo with vividness and compels his listeners to conjure similar memories of sense impressions in their minds (Scarry 1990; Pentcheva 2011; Kiilerich 2012).

The next few lines focus attention on the contrasts emerging on the surface of these onyx slabs: radiance and pallor, warmth and cold, dryness and wetness, the softness of wool and warmed beeswax seen next to the hardness of silver and gold. The description expands from the onyx into associations targeting the memory of sense perception of other materials. The flood of these associations paradoxically makes things that differ in essence appear similar in outward form. The final lines introduce the specks of gold and silver, thus activating the memory imprints of sparkle, stimulating the viewer to imagine matter imbued with spirit. The ekphrasis thus attains its goal to reveal the metaphysical in the material by the aggregation of images capturing the spectacle of vibrant matter.

Since this ekphrasis was not recited in Hagia Sophia but in the patriarchal palace, the original listeners did not physically confront the sight of the ambo as they listened to the recitation (Macrides and Magdalino 1988; Dark and Kostenev 2011). This removal from the actual structure allows the words more power to play with the audience’s memory and imagination. Perhaps this is one of the most significant differences between the Byzantine ekphrasis, as exemplified in this passage by Paul, and the precepts of formal analysis used in modern art history. The latter tends to name the essence of the materials and describe the shape of the structure. By contrast,

medieval ekphrasis of the sacred focuses on appearances—not essence—and their spiritual valence. It uses language to direct the mind to imagine changing appearances and then it links this variety to the quickening power of pneuma. The described material flux is potential, looming in one’s imagination. In time, it can be manifested, but only partially and ephemerally. The description trains the listener’s attention to focus on what is temporal and fleeting, rather than on what is permanent and static.

The vitality built through the imagined poikilia of onyx in Paul’s writing on the ambo aims to reveal the traces of a greater energy that quickens matter but remains invisible; it is manifested in the spectacle of appearances but resists a visible anthropomorphic form. The listener is led to understand that what is being described as shifting (aiolomorphos) is engendered by *empsychōsis* (embedded spirit). The ekphrasis does not identify “pneuma” per se or use the term “empsychōsis,” but this is implied in the reference to the ritual that takes place on the ambo. The ambo as the place for the recitation and chanting of the Word during the liturgy renders Christ incarnate in the midst of the congregation through the action of the human voice and the reverberant return produced by the architectural shell. This acoustic embodiment is a temporal phenomenon; its ritualistic, aural nature resists a material, anthropomorphic state. The singers, whom Paul calls *hymnopoloi* (from *polos*, meaning both “singer” and “axis”), reify the Logos in their vocal performance:

Then I approach the august place [the ambo],  
 which the emperor has recently brought to completion  
 this [is the] supremely beautiful place for the [sacred] books,  
 and [for] the performance of the mystical words.  
 In its center the God-fearing hymnists [hymnopoloi] of Christ,  
 by whose voice [*phōnē*] of immaculate breath, the divine sound [*omphē*]  
 that proclaimed the human birth of Christ, came among men.  
 (Paul the Silentary, *Descriptio ambonis*, vv. 26–32)

The singers’ voices become metonymically linked to the antipodes (*poloi*): voices and axes become interchangeable. Set in a ceaseless rotation, the singers produce the sound of praise imagined as continuously produced by the rotating celestial bodies. Paul manages to compel his listeners with just one word—“*polos* (singer/axis)” —to conjure up simultaneously the heavenly *musica mundana* and the terrestrial *musica humana*. Together, these imagined celestial and remembered human choirs produce the audible presence of the divine. The metaphysical emerges in the sonic, shying away from a physical, pictorial iconicity. The mixing of celestial and human voices mirrors the mingling of warm and cold, wet and dry, soft and hard in the temporal changes of the ambo’s onyx. Together, the sonic and the visual spectacles reveal how the continual oscillation between opposites sustained in one material body—the ambo—divulges the divine in matter (Pentcheva 2017).

## MOSAIC OF THE VIRGIN AND CHILD IN THE APSE OF HAGIA SOPHIA

---

The original Justinianic visual program in Hagia Sophia did not have monumental anthropomorphic images in its mosaics. This aniconic interior thus predisposed its viewers to seek the divine in non-figural manifestations—the visual phenomena of glitter and incandescence (as manifested in the ambo's poikilia) or in imagined images elicited by the chant in the phantasia of the faithful (the sonic icons of Christ produced by the singing hymnopoloi). Yet, what happens after Iconoclasm in Constantinople is the influx of figural art in the interior of the Great Church. The mosaic of the Virgin and Child was unveiled in the apse in 867; an image of Christ replaced the cross in the Great Dome; the ranks of church fathers appeared on the north and south tympana (Figure 2.2) (Mango 1962; Mango and Hawkins 1965; Teteriatnikov 1998). These anthropomorphic forms now mediated the encounter with the divine.

New liturgical poetry written specifically for the *kanon* (chant modeled on the biblical odes, borrowing from them the musical mode and the metric structure) insightfully narrated the events celebrated in the daily liturgy throughout the year and skillfully manipulated the emotional response of the participants (Wellesz 1961, 198–239; Louth 2005; Krueger 2014, 130–215). The *kanon* relies on narrative and emotion to model the encounter with the divine. A similar tendency toward a discursive mode is revealed in the use of figural decoration in monumental programs that reclaim their place on the walls of Middle Byzantine churches (Der Nersessian 1952; see Gerstel chapter, this volume).

Yet, what we encounter in the Great Church is not a simple return to the priorities of mimesis. The physical image is seen to exist in relation to an imprint it leaves in one's imagination, and frequently it is the latter that offers a fuller manifestation of the spiritual idea. But to grasp this idea, one needs the help of ekphrasis. Thus Photius' homily about the Mother and Child mosaic in the apse makes the viewer aware of a difference between the pictorial form and the imagined image. In the former, Mary does not direct her gaze to her Child, but in the imagined imprint in the phantasia, Mary casts a gaze full of love:

With such exactitude has the art of painting, which is a reflection of an inspiration from above, set up a lifelike imitation. For, as it were, she fondly turns her eyes on her begotten Child in the affection of her heart, yet assumes the expression of a detached and imperturbable mood at the passionless and wondrous nature of her offspring, and composes her gaze accordingly. (Photius, *Homily XVII*, sect. 2 [Laourdas 1959, 167]; English tr. *ArtByzEmp*, 187; Nelson 2000; Betancourt 2016a)

The ekphrasis purposefully obfuscates the contrast between what is depicted and what is imagined. While the material image does not convey emotion, the phantasia conjured through ekphrasis is drenched in love. The physical manifestation hides the affective



FIGURE 2.2. Hagia Sophia, mosaic in the apse, 867. The Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks Fieldwork Records and Papers, ca. late 1920s–2000s, U859613, MS.BZ.004, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, DC. Photograph: Courtesy of Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, DC.

content, and it is ekphrasis that rediscovers and returns emotion back to the viewers' imagination. The visionary realm is marked by the words *hoionei* "as it were," and the invisible "affection of her heart," or *storgē splagchnōn*. In the phantasia, Mary's imagined internal gaze is focused on the Child, expressing a deep maternal bond between them.

In the material image, the Virgin's eyes do not address either the Child or the spectator (Cormack 2000). The ekphrasis transforms the actual image; it plots a movement between seeing the physical form and reaching to the metaphysical vision or *theama* that can only be grasped through the mind (Betancourt 2016b). The ekphrasis thus produces a mental image that is at variance with what the physical eyes see. This alternative imagined representation constitutes a spiritual seeing, a different state of consciousness communing with the metaphysical (Kessler 1994; Kessler 2000; Kessler 2005).

## THE POIKILIA OF THE PORTABLE ICON AND ITS GAZE

---

In the Hagia Sophia mosaic, Mary avoids eye contact with both the Child and the viewer, a stance that the ekphrasis rectifies; it moves beyond form to conjure an internal vision. This disconnect between the material image and the *theama* is likely the result of the great distance between the apse mosaic and the floor. The physical image thus lends itself to this escape in the imagined. By contrast, the next example operates on an intimate level and specifically focuses on the synergy between the viewer's and the icon's eyes. It accentuates the possible changes of appearances, *poikilia*, as phenomenal expressions of animation.

We identify Byzantium with the culture of the painted icon (Carr 1997). But both during and after Iconoclasm, there is a movement away from privileging the painted image and toward icons in bas-relief in metal, ivory, and enamel. The iconoclasts had challenged painting as the deceit of the eyes, with skill creating a lifelike image that in truth and essence is dead matter. To avoid this accusation, the iconophiles embraced a new image theory that excised the hand of the artist, arguing that images are the imprint of form that is mechanically transmitted and reproduced, resulting in the relief icon (Pentcheva 2010, 62–88). Only the name established a connection to the prototype (Barber 2002, 107–23). If the materiality of the icon fell short of the essence of the prototype, thus marking the image as a site of absence, its rich surfaces became the opposite—a site of *poikilia*, a spectacle of glitter and shadow that could simulate the presence of the metaphysical in the shifting ephemeral appearance of polymorphic matter (Pentcheva 2010).

The *poikilia* is invested in materials: repoussé gold, enamel, and jewels. The bas-relief icon of the Archangel Michael, kept at the treasury of San Marco in Venice, offers a compelling example. His eyes have the potential to break free from the fixity of the gaze. Changing light produces this animation in the face (Pentcheva 2010, 128–43). By



**FIGURE 2.3 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 1A).** Icon of the Archangel Michael, late tenth century, gems, gold, and cloisonné enamel. Detail of the head; left eye looks down as the candle is raised high. Photo: Bissera V. Pentcheva, © Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice.

keeping the room illuminated just by natural light and moving a burning candle slowly across the surface of the icon, left and right, and then up and down, one can see how the traveling light causes shadows to appear in the eyes of the Archangel. When the candle ascends, his eyes seem to look down and reciprocally; when the candle descends, the gaze travels upwards.

The unfolding of this temporal phenomenon enacts the dynamics of prayer, showing the synergy between faithful and holy figure. The prayer, performed by the hands rising with the candle to the image and then slowly descending, elicits the response of the Archangel; its gaze first lowers down to acknowledge the prayer (Figure 2.3/Color Plate 1A) and then rises up heavenward as the tired hands of the faithful come down (Figure 2.4). The supplicant and image thus form pairs of opposite motions; the rising hands of the viewer elicit the lowering of the icon's gaze and vice versa; the descending hands engender the heavenward ascent of the saint's eyes (Pentcheva 2016a). The encounter of the image through its temporal *poikilia* produces in the viewer a perception of animation, not tied to form but to the changes of material surfaces set to perform in shifting ambient conditions. Subject and object become interconnected; the boundaries between the inert (icon) and the animate (viewer), static and moving become fused and confused. The viewer could see his/her own liveliness projected on the surface of the image.

*Ekphrasis* helps develop the viewer's sensitivity to this synergy between inanimate and animate. In his description of the palatial chapel (the *Pharos*), Photius reflects on



FIGURE 2.4. Icon of the Archangel Michael, late tenth century, gems, gold, and cloisonné enamel. Detail of the head, the shadow in the upper segment of the eye suggest a gaze looking up. Photo: Bissera V. Pentcheva, © Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice.

the symbiosis among viewer, image, and imagination, seeing them bound by a whirling force (*choros*):

It is as if one had entered heaven itself with no one barring the way from any side, and surrounded by radiance all around by the polymorphous and emerging-to-light beauties like so many stars, he is utterly struck in amazement. [. . .] Hence it seems that everything is in ecstatic motion, and that the church itself is whirling around. For the spectator, through his whirls in every direction and through the encircling movements, which the *poikilia* of the vision (*theamatos*) forces from all corners on the spectator to experience fully, imagines that his personal agitation is in the object. (Photius, *Homily X*, sect. 5, Laourdas 1959, 101)

Entry into the domed church appears like an entry into heavens; the viewer is enveloped in radiance. Light sparkling on the surface of the gold mosaics makes them resemble twinkling stars. The viewer is struck and arrested by the whirling force of this polymorphous spectacle. A juxtaposition is established between moving and moved, and the two become confused: the viewer advances as he steps in the naos, but once there, he or she faces the *poikilia* that appears to revolve and transfix the beholder. It is this spinning phenomenon that makes the viewer perceive the interior as animate. Phrases translated with “it seems, it appears” indicate this to be an entry in a state

between the material and the imagined, between concrete form and its dissolution in *poikilia*. The viewer feels as if the entire church is revolving. As the internal agitation increases, the viewer imagines himself projecting his internal state onto the space he views. The ekphrasis shapes the perception, articulating the hidden dynamic of the chorus and stirring the listener to feel and embody it. The mystery is thus communicated through language, and what is optically encountered as surface changes becomes an expression of ineffable spiritual presence that binds the viewer to the invisible energy manifested in the space.

In addition to ekphrasis, inscriptions or epigrams on works of art help focus this experience of animation at the encounter with the *poikilia* (Papalexandrou 2001; Pentcheva 2007; Rhoby 2009–2014; Drpić 2016). In one such example the liveliness of the object “bursts out” to conjure a vision (theama) of paradise:

The exceedingly holy wood of the cross is held  
 inside a golden container like [the Holy Cross] at Gabbata [Jerusalem].  
 Surrounded by no-small gems,  
 this [object covered in gold and gems] performs for me paradise  
 bursting out [with energy] as it blossoms on my chest.  
 (Manuelis Philae *Carmina* 1855–1857, no. 45, and Frolow 1961, no. 573)

Written by Manuel Philes (b. ca. 1275—d. ca. 1345), the epigram mentions first the fragment of the precious wood of the Holy Cross kept inside the precious container, then it acknowledges the expense of the materials invested in the decoration and how the gold and gems create a vibrant spectacle, by means of which they conjure a vision of paradise (Carr 2016; Maguire 2016). The material flux engenders a non-mimetic representation of Paradise that is phenomenal, kinesthetic, and temporal (Pentcheva 2016b). The Greek verb *ergazomai* “to produce the effect, to perform” denotes this process of simulation of the metaphysical in the *poikilia* of glittering materials. The poem detects this spiritual theama of paradise and brings it to consciousness.

## CONCLUSION

---

Language in the form of ekphrasis or epigram mediates this transition from discrete material forms and their phenomenal *poikilia* to the envisioned presence of the metaphysical. Paul the Silentiary’s rendition of the onyx ambo’s incandescent performance or Photius’ ekphrasis of the Pharos seeks to reveal a metaphysical force that causes the *poikilia* and imbues matter with liveliness. By contrast, the ekphrasis of the monumental mosaic in Hagia Sophia seeks to establish distance and compel the viewer to turn to spiritual seeing and the internal vision of the *phantasia*. The material imagination stimulated by language helps the viewer discover the invisible presence of the divine.



While for the monumental mosaic image this is an internal theama, for the bas-relief icon of the Archangel it is an external manifestation not bound in form (iconography) but in the changing appearances of the material flux (poikilia). The empsychōsis or inspiring in the portable icon is manifested in the temporal performance emerging out of the synergy of candle lights, viewer, and image.

The role played by Byzantine ekphrasis to help the viewer recognize this presence of Spirit in matter challenges Alfred Gell's theory of art's agency. The latter proposed that the adduction of agency to the object is a system operating outside and in opposition to language. He writes that "things with their thingly causal properties are essential to the exercise of agency as states of mind" (Gell 1998, 20). Yet, what the medieval examples attest is that agency of the icon does not exist outside language; ekphrasis, chant, and epigram shape a mystic vision, allowing the transition from material forms and poikilia of appearances to a spiritual vision.

Future collaboration between scholars and curators could develop exhibitions that stage the radiant poikilia of the Byzantine icons. New technology could assist in the process; 3D replicas could be used and manipulated in space without endangering the originals. These displays should further seek to immerse modern viewers in some of the texts originally chanted or recited before these images. The more we can bring the study of hymnography and its music, the deeper we will be able to plumb the emotional response these images are capable of eliciting (Constatas 2016; Pentcheva 2019). The new installations could give modern audiences more empathy to the Byzantine spiritual vision. Ultimately, our art history could shift from mainly studying what is represented to what is imagined through the encounter with these icons.

## REFERENCES

### Primary Sources

- ArtByzEmp*, 99, 104, 185, 190.
- Diogenes Laertios. *Vitae philosophorum*. Trans. A. Long and D. Sedley. 1987. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. I, 241–52 (Cambridge).
- Manuel Philes. *Carmina*. Ed. E. Miller. 1855–1857, rpt. 1976. *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, 2 vols. (Paris).
- Paul the Silentary. *Descriptio S. Sophiae and Descriptio ambonis*. Ed. P. Friedländer 1912, rpt. 1969. Johannes von Gaza, *Paulus Silentarius und Prokopios von Gaza; Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit* (Leipzig and Hildesheim/New York).
- Photius. *Homilies X and XVII*. Laourdas, V. 1959. *Photiou Homiliai*, 164–72 (Thessaloniki). English trans *ArtByzEmp*, 185–90.
- Theodore Stoudites, "Letter to His Brother Naukratios (Epistle 2, no. 36)." Ed. J.-P. Mingé. 1857–1866. *PG*, vol. 99: cols. 1220 CD–1222 AD.A.
- Vita Tarasii*. Ed. I. Heikel. 1891. *Ignatii Diaconi Vita Tarasii Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani* (Helsinki). Trans. S. Efthymiadis. 1998. *The Life of Patriarch Tarasios* (Aldershot).

## Secondary Sources

- Barber, C. 2002. *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton).
- Betancourt, R. 2016a. "Tempted to Touch: Tactility, Ritual, and Mediation in Byzantine Visuality." *Speculum* 91, 3: 660–90.
- Betancourt, R. 2016b. "The Icon's Gold: A Medium of Light, Air and Space." *West 86th* 23, 2: 252–58.
- Brubaker, L. 1989. "Perception and Conception: Art, Theory and Culture in Ninth-Century Byzantium." *Word & Image* 5, 1: 19–32.
- Bynum, C. 2011. *Christian Materiality. An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York).
- Carr, A. 1997. "Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople." In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by H. Maguire, 81–99 (Washington, DC).
- Carr, A. 2016. "Reflections on the Medium of the Miraculous." In *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by S. E. G. Gerstel, 33–52 (Turnhout).
- Constas, Father M. 2016. "Poetry and Painting in the Middle Byzantine Period: A Bilateral Icon from Kastoria and the Stavrotheotokia of Joseph the Hymnographer." In *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by S. E. G. Gerstel, 13–32 (Turnhout).
- Cormack, R. 2000. "The Mother of God in the Mosaics of Hagia Sophia." In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by M. Vassilaki, 107–23 (Milan).
- Cox Miller, P. 2009. *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia).
- Dark, K., and J. Kosteneč. "A New Archaeological Study of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul." In *Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies: Sofia, 22–27 August 2011*, edited by I. Iliev, I, 213–37 (Sofia).
- Drpić, I. 2016. *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Late Byzantium* (Cambridge and New York).
- Elsner, J. 2014. "Introduction." In *Art and Rhetoric in Roman Culture*, edited by J. Elsner and M. Meyer, 1–34 (Cambridge).
- Franses, R. 2003. "When All That Is Gold Does Not Glitter: On the Strange History of Looking at Byzantine Art." In *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium: Studies Presented to Robin Cormack*, edited by A. Eastmond and L. James, 13–24 (Aldershot).
- Frolow, A. 1961. *La relique de la Vraie Croix* (Paris).
- Gell, A. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford).
- James, L. 1995. *Light and Color in Byzantium*. Oxford.
- Kessler, H. 1994. "Facies bibliothecae revelata. Carolingian Art as Spiritual Seeing." *Testo e immagine nell'Alto medioevo*, 533–84. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 41 (Spoleto).
- Kessler, H. 2000. *Spiritual Seeing. Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia).
- Kessler, H. 2005. "Hoc visibile imaginatum figurat illud invisible verum? Imagining God in Pictures of Christ." In *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Papers from "Verbal and Pictorial Imaging, Representing and Accessing Experience of the Invisible, 400–1000"*, edited by G. de Nie, K. Morrison, and M. Mostert, 291–325 (Turnhout).
- Kiilerich, B. 2012. "The Aesthetic Viewing of Marble in Byzantium: From Global Impression to Focal Attention." *Arte Medievale Series IV*, 2: 9–28.

- Krueger, D. 2014. *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium* (Philadelphia).
- Limberis, V. 2011. *Architects of Piety: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Cult of the Martyrs* (Oxford).
- Louth, A. 2005. "Christian Hymnography from Romanos the Melodist to John Damascene." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 57: 295–306.
- Macrides, R., and P. Magdalino. 1988. "The Architecture of Ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Poem on Hagia Sophia." *BMGS* 12: 47–82.
- Maguire, H. 1981. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Maguire, H. 2016. "Heaven on Earth: Neoplatonism in the Churches of Greece." In *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 53–68 (Turnhout).
- Mango, C. 1962. *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul* (Washington, DC).
- Mango, C., and E. Hawkins. 1965. "The Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. Report on the Work Carried Out in 1964." *DOP* 19: 113–51.
- Nelson, R. 2000. "To Say and To See: Ekphrasis and Vision in Byzantium." In *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance*, edited by R. Nelson, 143–68 (Cambridge and New York).
- Der Nersessian, S. 1952. "Le décor d'églises du IX siècle." In *Actes du VIe Congrès international des études byzantines, Paris 1948*, 315–20 (Paris).
- Papalexandrou, A. 2001. "Text in Context: Eloquent Monuments and the Byzantine Beholder." *Word & Image* 17, 3: 259–283.
- Peers, G. 2015. "Transfiguring Materialities: Relational Abstraction in Byzantium and Its Exhibition." *Convivium* 2, 2: 116–137.
- Peers, G., ed. 2013. *Byzantine Things in the World* (Houston and New Haven).
- Pentcheva, B. 2006. "The Performative Icon." *AB* 88, 4: 631–55.
- Pentcheva, B. 2007. "Epigrams on Icons." In *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, edited by L. James, 120–38 (Cambridge and New York).
- Pentcheva, B. 2009. "Moving Eyes: Surface and Shadow in the Byzantine Mixed-Media Relief Icon." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 53: 223–34.
- Pentcheva, B. 2010. *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Pentcheva, B. 2011. "Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics." *Gesta* 50, 2: 93–111.
- Pentcheva, B. 2016a. "Glittering Eyes: Animation in the Byzantine Eikōn and the Western Imago." *Codex Aquivilarensis* 32: 209–26.
- Pentcheva, B. 2016b. "Cross, Tunic, Body: Theology through the Phenomenology of Light." In *La stauroteca di Bessarione: Atti delle giornate internazionali di studio La stauroteca di Bessarione*, edited by P. Schreiner and V. Poletto, 257–79 (Venice).
- Pentcheva, B. 2017. *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Pentcheva, B. 2019. "Transcendent Visions: Voice and Icon in Hagia Sophia." In *Icons of Sound: Voice, Architecture, and Imagination*, edited by B. Pentcheva, 101–15 (New York).
- Rhoby, A., ed. 2009–2014. *Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung* (Vienna).
- Roberts, M. 1989. *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca and London).
- Scarry, E. 1990. *Dreaming by the Book* (Princeton).
- Teteriatnikov, N. 1998. *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul: The Fossati Restoration and the Work of the Byzantine Institute* (Washington, DC).
- Webb, R. 1999. "The Aesthetics of Sacred Space: Narrative, Metaphor and Motion in Ekphrasis of Church Buildings." *DOP* 53: 59–74.

- Webb, R. 2009. *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham).
- Webb, R. 2017. "Spatial Embodiment and Agency in Ekphrasis of Church Buildings." In *Aural Architecture in Byzantium: Music, Acoustics and Ritual*, edited by B. V. Pentcheva, 163–75 (Abingdon and New York).
- Webb, R., and L. James. 1991. "'To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places': Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium." *AH* 14: 1–17.
- Wellesz, E. 1961. *History of Byzantine Music* (Oxford).



## CHAPTER 3

---

# SPOLIA IN BYZANTINE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

---

BENTE KIILERICH

## INTRODUCTION

---

*SPOLIA*, the reuse of material remains, has been a popular subject in recent studies on medieval art and architecture. Some scholars have focused on ancient or medieval sculpted reliefs and architectural fragments incorporated into later structures. Others have discussed Byzantine viewers' attitudes toward pagan statues and monuments that have been re-contextualized in medieval settings (Mango 1994; James 1996). The latter category is actually closer to the Latin meaning of the word *spolium* as "booty" or a "spoil of war." Depending on how one defines the concept, spolia can designate any artifacts or fragments that have been transferred to a different setting than that for which they were originally intended (Kinney 2006; Brilliant and Kinney 2011; Kinney 2011; Altekamp et. al 2013).

## SPOLIA IN ART AND SPOLIATED ARTWORKS

---

Constantine the Great brought statues to Constantinople from various parts of the empire. These included significant works like the She-Wolf, a symbol of Rome, and the Ass and Keeper that commemorated Octavian's victory at Actium. Such works were undoubtedly part of a deliberate program to cement the political and cultural ideology of *Nea Roma* (Bassett 2004). Over the centuries, other emperors added to the core collection. One of the few extant spoliated works still in situ is the partially preserved bronze serpent column in the Hippodrome in Constantinople. Originally set up in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi as a monument to the Greeks' victory over the Persians

at Plataea in 479 BCE, it carried a golden tripod (Madden 1992; Stephenson 2016). Constantine the Great plausibly brought it to Constantinople, where it is attested to at least by the early fifth century. Since Constantine and successive emperors also fought the Persians, some of its original meaning may have been appropriated: it may have been intended as a propaganda piece (Stichel 1997, 320). Still, 800 years after Plataea, most people would probably have been unaware of its triumphal meaning. In its secondary context, the associations inevitably changed over time. In the later Byzantine period, not only the Greek but possibly even Constantine's motives for setting up the serpent column may have passed into oblivion. The column acquired a new purpose, serving for some time as a water spout for a fountain. After the three serpent heads were broken off around 1700, the monument took on a rather amputated appearance. In the twenty-first century, the column is part of the tourist agenda, to be admired along with the other monuments in the Hippodrome: the built obelisk and the Theodosian base carrying the Egyptian obelisk. The obelisk, a solar symbol, is in itself a gigantic spolium (Figure 3.1) (Kiilerich 1998). Given that the emperor Augustus had brought two obelisks to Rome, it is yet another token of New Rome appropriating visual ideologies associated with Old Rome. Obelisks played a key role in early Byzantine emperors' efforts to outdo each other by trying to procure bigger and better obelisks than their predecessors.

Other spolia are less monumental. At Nicopolis in Epirus, ancient Actium—from where the Ass and Keeper group was procured—Roman architectural spolia were reused in Basilica B, the Basilica of Alkison, 450–516 CE. A large cylindrical statue base became part of the ambo. Roughly half of its Roman Amazonomachy relief, echoing themes from Phidias' shield of Athena Parthenos, was left untouched (Fink 1964–1965); on the rest of the base the figures were chiseled off and covered with Byzantine mosaics (Figure 3.2). The two remaining busts in medallions depict an angel and a saint; a no-longer-extant central figure, plausibly Christ or the Virgin, was originally flanked by an angel and a saint on either side (Papadopoulou and Konstantaki 2007). Of interest in our context is whether the Roman relief, which was facing away from the middle aisle, was meant to be seen or covered. Finely wrought Roman coffers depicting spoils of war such as a cuirass, helmet, and shield were reused both in the ambo and for chancel screens in the transept (Orlandos and Soteriou 1937, figs. 2–4; Papadopoulou and Konstantaki 2007, figs. 12–14).

Did the builders of the basilica reuse this material in order to display the legacy of the Augustan city? Was it a sign of the triumph of Christianity? Was it done because the commissioners appreciated the artistic value of the carvings? Or was it simply an economic measure? To some extent, these motives might be intertwined; ideological, triumphal, aesthetic, and practical motivations all could theoretically undergird the reuse of the Roman elements at Nicopolis. This example shows the difficulty of establishing the meaning of spolia and the obvious danger of modern overinterpretation.



FIGURE 3.1. Egyptian obelisk spoliated by Theodosius I, Istanbul Hippodrome, 390. Photo: B. Küllerich.





FIGURE 3.2. Roman statue base with Amazonomachy reused with Christian mosaics in the ambo, Basilica of Alkison, Nicopolis, ca. 500. Flickr, Creative Commons; photo: Dan Diffendale.

## SPOLIA IN ARCHITECTURE

In secular architectural contexts, spolia can be found in palaces (Mango 1995), cisterns (Altug 2018), city walls, and fortifications (Greenhalgh 2009; Geymonat 2012). City walls required a vast amount of building material, and the builders often included old material ranging from blocks to more irregular pieces. Gates were sometimes marked by the insertion of ancient figural pieces. The ancient spolia in situ in the thirteenth-century city walls at Nicaea, modern Iznik in Bithynia, ca. 130 km from Constantinople, are conspicuously displayed at the north and east gates. The fragmentary figural reliefs derive from a Tetrarchic monument, ca. 300 CE, possibly a triumphal arch (Laubscher 1993). One spolium shows battle scenes between Romans and barbarians on horseback; another presents the submission of a barbarian chief before a Roman emperor. At the east gate, the reliefs display fighting infantry and a scene of spoils of war and barbarians being led into captivity. The latter relief is interesting inasmuch as it is a spolium depicting spolia, a motif encountered earlier in Basilica B at Nicopolis. Theodore I Laskaris had fled to Nicaea in 1204 and set up a court in exile there. When he incorporated the Tetrarchic reliefs with these particular subjects into the wall near the gates, the most vulnerable part of the defense system, it may be suggested that the theme of victorious Romans was meant to function as a kind of symbolic protection, to scare off potential aggressors (Kiilerich 2006, 138-9; Bevilaqua 2013).

Columns and other architectural elements were reused in Byzantine churches. Church exteriors at times incorporate ancient figural reliefs and fragmentary

inscriptions (Saradi 1997). However, the typical Middle and Late Byzantine brick or brick-and-stone architecture did not facilitate the insertion of such pieces. Except for columns, Middle and Late Byzantine churches in Constantinople show a restricted use of figural spolia. It is in Greece that one finds most extant examples of spolia use.

The Church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Skripou in Boeotia is securely dated to between 870 and 879, as the donor inscriptions—carved on reused stone blocks—mention the emperors Basil, Leo, and Constantine. The commissioner was a high-ranking official, the protospatharios Leo (Papalexandrou 2003; Prieto-Domingues 2013). The building incorporates spolia from the nearby ancient site of Orchomenos, and it has been suggested that the builders wanted to establish some kind of “ideological and tangible link with the past greatness of Orchomenos” (Papalexandrou 1998, 320). Up to the level of the vaults, the church is almost entirely constructed from large second-hand blocks of local grey limestone (Papalexandrou 1998, 250-256). It should be noted that the church was rebuilt later in the Middle Ages and partly restored in modern times. Visually characteristic for the church are the circular sections of column drums laid in rows in the lower part of the exterior walls. Ancient victor lists from sporting contexts were inserted into door jambs. It is apparent that the architects put readily available building material to use, so the primary reason for reuse was probably pragmatic. Still, by arranging the spolia so that the circular sections of the drums came to form a pattern, a new aesthetic came about. Also worth noting is that certain antique specimens such as the inscriptions were conspicuously placed by the door.

Some 400 years later, the *modus operandi* in the late thirteenth-century Church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Merbaka in the Argolid is related to that at Skripou: we find again the reuse of building material from a nearby ancient site, some new ornamental reliefs and the incorporation of a few Roman funerary stelae. Large ashlar blocks from the nearby Heraion at Argos, used in the lower part of the walls, were probably chosen primarily because they were convenient, ready-made building material. In the Byzantine *cloisonné* walls above, a few figural spolia are inserted. At the eastern ends of the north and south walls, there are two funerary stelai and a votive relief. On the stele in the south-east corner, showing two men flanking a woman, the first head has been replaced by a mask, the second head is partly obliterated, while the third head is destroyed. The heads of the two female figures on the other stele have been disfigured in similar ways (Sanders 2015, 606, fig. 16 and 607, fig. 17). While this re-cutting may have been done in connection with the reutilization of the pieces, the possibility that it could have happened earlier cannot be disregarded. Accordingly, these and some of the other spolia at Merbaka are perhaps in a tertiary context. The church has been plausibly associated with William of Moerbeke, bishop of Corinth from 1278 to 1285. Sanders has argued that the spolia refer to the Second Council at Lyon in 1274 and the reunion of the Western and Eastern Church; the stele with three figures represents the Holy Trinity—the site is known as *Agia Triada*—and the stele with two figures represents the father and son (*filioque*) (Sanders 2015). Whether this interpretation holds true is obviously open to discussion. Whatever the answer, Merbaka and Skripou both suggest reuse as primarily a practical matter. Still, the inclusion of select figural images that could easily have been excluded—with many plain blocks to choose from—proves that the builders must have had a particular reason

for including these pieces. They may have found them interesting as relics of the past, as artworks, or they may have given them a new Christian interpretation.

The church with the most extensive use of spolia is the Panagia Gorgoepikoos, the Little Metropolis in Athens. The exterior is made wholly of reused material: marble and limestone ashlar blocks and, its distinguishing feature, the approximately 100 figural and non-figural spolia, ranging from the Hellenistic period to ca. 1200 or later. There is no preserved record of when the church was erected. It is therefore hardly surprising that this atypical cross-in-square church has perplexed scholars and been dated variously from the sixth to the fifteenth century (Kiilerich 2005). A characteristic feature of the Little Metropolis is that many of the spolia are in a tertiary rather than a secondary context. For instance, a block on the north side that is turned upside-down carries two crosses of totally different design; these clearly belong to two distinct phases separated by several centuries. It has sometimes been assumed that crosses were put on the pagan pieces in order to make them suitable for this particular church, prophylactically safeguarding the Christian building. But the crosses were not carved on the Classical reliefs in connection with their being incorporated into the church. That the builders picked out already-crossed items can be ascertained from the fact that the Classical reliefs all have different types of crosses, plausibly carved at different times: a satyr panel (N) shows two large stepped crosses, a grave stele with two women (N) carries an unassuming small cross (Figure 3.3), a panel with a woman on the west façade has a large patriarchal cross with two crossbars, while the crosses inscribed on the calendar frieze over the main entrance are of the equal-armed cross pattée type. Finally, other Greco-Roman reliefs have no crosses at all. The different types of crosses indicate that the sculptures had been Christianized centuries before they were incorporated into the church.

The Little Metropolis was long associated with the learned bishop Michael Choniates and dated ca. 1180/1200 (Maguire 1994; Bouras 2010). However, when Cyriakos of Ancona visited Athens in 1436, he made note of an inscription on a base near the agora. This inscription can now be seen on the south wall of the church. The date of Cyriakos' visit thus becomes a *terminus post quem* for the Little Metropolis. In fact, the church may have been built as late as around 1460, in the early years of Ottoman rule (Kiilerich 2005; Kaldellis 2009, 212–14). At first, this late date may seem surprising; still, the multitude of figural spolia and the heterogeneous nature of the material are atypical of Byzantine churches. This unique structure is actually better understood in a post-Byzantine than in a Byzantine context; the spolia could then be interpreted as a visual manifestation of religious and cultural identity (Kiilerich 2005, 111).

## MOTIVATIONS FOR REUSE

---

As the problem of reaching consensus on the date of the Little Metropolis shows, it is often difficult to define the specific cultural context that governs the decision



FIGURE 3.3. Funerary stele with cross; Byzantine spolium with crosses of different date, north side, Little Metropolis, Athens, ca. 1456. Photo: B. Kiilerich.

to use spolia. No general theoretical model can be applied to explain the presence of reused material. Some years ago, Esch divided Western medieval spolia into five main categories: material, aesthetic, exorcism, *interpretatio Christiana*, and political legitimation (Esch 1969; 2005; 2011). More recently, Greenhalgh (2011, 81) has reduced these categories to pragmatism, aesthetics, and ideology. Kiilerich (2006) has proposed a main distinction between structural spolia (columns, building blocks) and accidental spolia (visual accents that could be removed without changing an overall design). Still, even this simple distinction can be difficult to make, as a structural element may be no less ideologically charged than an accidental fragment. Expanding on Esch's categories, a number of potential and partly overlapping reasons for reuse can be posited:

#### Pragmatic

- lack of time
- lack of money
- lack of material
- lack of manpower

**Aesthetic**

- appreciation of material
- appreciation of variety
- appreciation of ornamental value
- appreciation of artistic value

**Cultural**

- antiquarian
- cultural heritage and tradition
- revival
- status, show-off

**Politico-ideological**

- creating a “faked” past
- legitimation
- power and propaganda
- triumphal

**Religious and magic**

- apotropaic
- *reinterpretatio christiana*
- taming and neutralization
- relics

In many instances, pragmatic reasons underlie reuse. It was obviously convenient to reuse ready-made blocks from nearby ancient sites, thus saving time, money, material, and manpower. But sometimes the material had to be transported from a considerable distance and recut to fit its new purpose. Thus, reuse was not necessarily the easiest solution. There might, however, be a shortage of a particular type of stone. For example, from around the seventh century onwards, porphyry had to be recycled. Here at least two motivations came into play: the purple stone was appreciated for its aesthetic qualities but it was also ideologically charged, being intimately associated with the emperor.

The aesthetic aspects of spolia use cover a range of possibilities, from a general appreciation of the aesthetic properties of a polished stone slab, via the enjoyment of variety and an appreciation of a carved ornament, to a connoisseur evaluation of specific artworks. This leads us to cultural motivations. Spolia may have survived by chance as *curiosa*, they may have been deliberately preserved on account of an awareness of a cultural heritage or tradition, and they may have been deliberately used to link a patron to that tradition. The collecting of ancient statues could be seen as a way of showing one's sophistication, cultural formation, and status. For the creation of a faked past, as in the launching of Constantinople as Nea Roma, a mixture of cultural and politico-ideological motifs could be postulated.

Certain images, such as *gorgoneia*, were plausibly believed to have apotropaic power. In the Basilica Cistern in Constantinople, two keystone Medusa heads came to function as pedestals for reused columns; they were perhaps believed to somehow confer protection to the place or the water contained within it. Other images were given a Christian reinterpretation. In sum, different types of reuse were governed by different motives. Oftentimes more than a single motivation probably came into play. Fixing the meaning is complicated inasmuch as viewers may over time come to perceive a spolium differently from what was originally intended.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

---

Spolia require cross-disciplinary study: archaeology, architectural history, art history, history, epigraphy, aesthetics, cultural studies, memory studies, anthropology, and possibly psychology can all contribute. While the archaeological approach aims to establish the original context and the date and meaning of a given spolium, the art historical approach will be more likely to seek the meaning(s) of the spolium in the later context(s). Since a spolium may have gone through many phases over the centuries, future research may consider that while we generally refer to spolia as objects in secondary contexts, the context may well be tertiary (or even quaternary). This means that the spolia represent several cultural contexts. An approach that might prove useful in spolia studies is object biography. The aim of an object biography is to trace the history of an object from its manufacture through its various instances of reemployment (Kristensen 2013).

Another avenue to explore is the aesthetics of spolia. When a building presents a mixture of new and old elements taken from very different contexts, this may lead to a disjointed jigsaw-puzzle-like aesthetic. However, it was hardly a conscious wish to present disjointedness; thus, one must be aware of the dangers of seeing this as a deliberate aesthetic of *varietas*. Since most architectural spolia are fragments, a discussion of spolia should also entail an analysis of fragmentariness as a phenomenon. If, as a main principle, a spolium was meant to be seen, then which aesthetic principles could be entertained when positioning a certain number of fragments on a wall? An important question needing further investigation pertains to color: in some instances, color may have highlighted the spolia. But at times the façades of Byzantine churches were plastered and the spolia totally covered. If so, rather than being put on display, advertising some kind of message, the spolia would have served a hidden purpose. Another point that could be addressed is the phenomenon of pseudo-spolia, new pieces deliberately fashioned to look old, a practice seen in medieval Italy (Kiilerich 2010). If spolia were sought after but difficult to procure, it is reasonable to assume that artists may have carved a new image in an old style to give the impression of a spolium.

Spoliation can be viewed both as a destructive and as a constructive act. Paradoxically, the use of spolia may have preserved for posterity ancient objects—ranging from a tiny

gem to a monumental obelisk—that might not otherwise have been salvaged. The intriguing combinations of old and new and the many questions the juxtaposition of different cultural elements raise are probably the reason why spolia continue to engage us today.

## REFERENCES

- Altekamp, S., C. Marcks-Jacobs, and P. Seiler, eds. 2013. *Perspektiven der Spolienforschung 1* (Berlin).
- Altug, K. 2018. “Reconsidering the Use of Spolia in Byzantine Constantinople.” In *Scritti in onore di Alessandra Guiglia*, edited by S. Pedone and A. Paribeni, 3–16 (Rome).
- Bassett, S. 2004. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge).
- Bevilaqua, L. 2013. “Displaying the Past in Byzantium: Figural Spolia on the City Gates of Nicaea (13th c.)” *Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art* 3: 145–50.
- Bouras, Ch. 2010. *Byzantinè Athèna* (Athens).
- Brilliant, R., and D. Kinney, eds. 2011. *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherry Levine* (Farnham).
- Esch, A. 1969. “Spolien: Zum Wiederverwendung antiker Baustücke und Skulpturen im mittelalterlichen Italien.” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51: 2–64.
- Esch, A. 2005. *Wiederverwendung von Antike im Mittelalter* (Berlin).
- Esch, A. 2011. “On the Reuse of Antiquity: The Perspectives of the Archaeologist and of the Historian.” In *Reuse Value*, edited by R. Brilliant and D. Kinney, 13–31 (Farnham).
- Fink, J. 1964–65. “Amazonenkämpfe auf einer Reliefbasis in Nikopolis.” *Österreichisches Jahreshfte* 47: 70–92.
- Geymonat, L. V. 2012. “The Syntax of Spolia in Byzantine Thessaloniki.” In *Approaches to Byzantine Architecture and its Decoration*, edited by S. Ćurčić, M. Johnson, and A. Papalexandrou, 47–65 (Farnham).
- Greenhalgh, M. 2009. *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Mediaeval Mediterranean* (Leiden).
- Greenhalgh, M. 2011. “Spolia: A Definition in Ruins.” In *Reuse Value*, edited by R. Brilliant and D. Kinney, 75–95 (Farnham).
- James, L. 1996. “‘Pray not fall into Temptation and be on your Guard’: Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople.” *Gesta* 35: 12–20.
- Kaldellis, A. 2009. *The Christian Parthenon* (Cambridge).
- Kiilerich, B. 1998. *The Obelisk Base in Constantinople: Court Art and Imperial Ideology* (Rome).
- Kiilerich, B. 2005. “Making Sense of the Spolia in the Little Metropolis in Athens.” *Arte Medievale* n.s. 4, 2: 95–114.
- Kiilerich, B. 2006. “Antiquus et modernus: Spolia in Medieval Art—Western, Eastern and Islamic.” In *Medioevo: Il tempo degli antichi*, edited by A. C. Quintavalle, 135–45 (Milan).
- Kiilerich, B. 2010. “The Rhetoric of Materials in the Tempietto Longobardo at Cividale.” In *L’VIII secolo: Un secolo inquieto*, edited by V. Pace, 93–102 (Cividale del Friuli).
- Kiilerich, B. Forthcoming. “Spolia.” In *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Archaeology of Late Antiquity*, edited by L. Rutgers, J. Magness, and R. Jensen. (Cambridge).
- Kinney, D. 2006. “The Concept of Spolia.” In *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, edited by C. Rudolph, 233–52 (Oxford).

- Kinney, D. 2011. Introduction to *Reuse Value*, edited by R. Brilliant and D. Kinney, 1–11 (Farnham).
- Kristensen, T. M. 2013. “The Life Histories of Roman Statuary and Some Aspects of Sculptural Spoliation in Late Antiquity.” In *Perspektiven der Spolienforschung*, edited by S. Altekamp, C. Marcks-Jacobs, and P. Seiler, 1: 23–46 (Berlin).
- Laubscher, H.-P. 1993. “Ein tetrarchisches Siegesdenkmal in Iznik (Nikaia).” *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 108: 375–97.
- Madden, T. F. 1992. “The Serpent Column of Delphi in Constantinople: Placement, Purposes, and Mutilations.” *BMGS* 16: 111–45.
- Maguire, H. 1994. “The Cage of Crosses: Ancient and Medieval Sculptures on the ‘Little Metropolis’ in Athens.” In *Thymiama stên mnêmê tês Laskarinas Bouras*, 169–72 (Athens).
- Mango, C. 1994. “Lattitude byzantine à l’égard des antiquités gréco-romaines.” In *Byzance et les images*, edited by A. Guillou and J. Durand, 95–120 (Paris).
- Mango, C. 1995. “Ancient Spolia in the Great Palace of Constantinople.” In *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, edited by D. Mouriki et. al, 645–57 (Princeton).
- Orlandos, A., and G. Soteriou. 1937. “Anaskafai Nikopoleos.” *Praktika tes archaiologikes etaireias*: 78–83.
- Papadopoulou, B. N., and A. I. Konstantaki. 2007. “Anaglyfa architektonika melê Basilikês B (Alkisonos): Paratêrêsis kai symperasmata.” In *Nicopolis B, Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11–15 Sept 2002)*, edited by K. Zachos, 637–57 (Preveza).
- Papalexandrou, A. 1998. *The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture, and Inscriptions in Ninth-century Byzantium* (PhD diss., University of Michigan).
- Papalexandrou, A. 2003. “Memory Tattered and Torn: Spolia in the Heartland of Byzantine Hellenism.” In *Archaeologies of Memory*, edited by R. M. Van Dyke and S. E. Alcock, 56–80 (Oxford).
- Prieto-Dominguez, O. 2013. “On the Founder of the Skripou Church.” *GRBS* 53: 166–91.
- Sanders, G. D. R. 2015. “William of Moerbeke’s Church at Merbaka (Agia Triada, Argolida).” *Hesperia* 84, 3: 583–626.
- Saradi, H. 1997. “The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence.” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, 4: 395–423.
- Spolia in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages—Ideology, Aesthetics and Artistic Practice*. 2012. Hortus Artium Medievalium 17 (Turnhout).
- Stephenson, P. 2016. *The Serpent Column: A Cultural Biography* (Oxford).
- Stichel, R. H. W. 1997. “Die ‘Schlangensäule’ im Hippodrom von Istanbul. Zum spät- und nachantiken Schicksal des delphischen Votivs der Schlacht von Plataiai.” *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 47: 315–48.





## CHAPTER 4

---

# THE ICON

---

REBECCA W. CORRIE

PERHAPS no form of visual or material culture is more closely associated with the life of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church than the painted icon. Certainly by the Late Middle Ages it had become the quintessential Orthodox work both within and outside the empire. Virtually every study of the icon begins with a simple definition of an icon as a portrait, an image, a likeness, a visual representation that in the case of Orthodoxy provides a worshipper with access to its prototype, whether deity, saint, or sacred event. Like this description, the ability of accurate copies of miraculous icons to carry their power suggests that their appearance was unchanging or static. But recent publications, especially those regarding the formulation of new types of images of the Virgin and Child in the later Byzantine era, have set a pattern for future study, observing that while aspects of iconography, narrative imagery, and theology remained recognizable through nearly two millennia, religious images nevertheless changed as they intersected with the religious and political events in which their production was embedded. Commonly understood to reflect persistent imagery from an ancient and venerable past, both their configuration and at times the messages they carried were fluid and could be incorporated into new settings. Thus, this article argues that continued investigation of the reception of icons beyond the empire will provide new insight into their meaning and form.

Following more than a century of study devoted to the Orthodox icon, in recent decades academic research and museum publications increased focus on Late and Post-Byzantine, Coptic, and Crusader images, as well as cultic images from Roman antiquity (*Faith and Power*; Cormack 1997; Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998; Bakalova 2000; Folda 2005; Cormack 2007; Vassilaki 2011; Peers 2015; Matthews 2016). Articles and books address not only the political function and theology of Byzantine icons, but also their relationship to art of the West, especially Italy, and the market for Eastern icons in late medieval and Renaissance Europe (Ousterhout and Brubaker 1995; Ainsworth 2004; Newall 2013). Fueling scholarly innovation has been a series of exhibitions reaching from Los Angeles to New York, Paris, London, Athens, St. Petersburg, and Washington, as well as changes in the ways in which the history of art and visual culture is practiced

(*Treasures of Mt. Athos*; Vassilaki 2000; *Faith and Power; Byzantium, 330-1453*; Drandaki, Papanikola-Bakirtzi, and Tourta 2013). Using the lenses of current literary and anthropological theory, historians have interrogated the ways in which icons functioned for the individual worshipper (Nelson 1989; Barber 2007; Pentcheva 2010; Betancourt 2016). As the methodological approaches have broadened, new questions have arisen, not only regarding where and by and for whom images were made, but also how distinctive types of images came to be identified and repeated, and even whether the painted panel was always the dominant icon type (Pentcheva 2010). Scholars ask what the history of objects can tell us about cultural and historical developments and how various users of icons established or transformed their own identities through that use. Important is the recognition that iconographic formulations, for example, types of the Virgin, that might seem fixed in fact emerged and then were transformed under political and religious pressures, some of them quite local. Even the names by which scholars and believers have long identified them can be unstable (Babić 1988; Carr 2002b).

To be sure, most of the modern devout, collectors, dealers, and even historians think of the icon as a single form of object or work—a devotional image representing Christ, the Virgin, saints, or sacred history, painted on a wooden panel. And yet as every scholar who writes in this field notes, the possibilities associated with the term *icon* are much broader, for its production is shared across numerous media. Indeed, a few have observed that the immense and essential collection of icons at St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai, which first came to scholarly attention in the middle of the twentieth century, has shaped the current conception of the icon, focusing it on the painted panel to the exclusion of other forms (Sotēriou 1956; Pentcheva 2010). In fact, the possibilities are vast. Images of the Virgin and Child or Christ or individual saints or groups of saints or sacred history, such as Infancy and Passion cycles, might be made of ivory, precious metal, mosaics, or other valued materials (Maguire 1996; Vassilaki 2000; see Connor, James, and Schwartz chapters, this volume).

Nevertheless, over centuries the image painted on wood intended for veneration, whatever its scale, has retained the greatest aura of authenticity and authority, in part owing to its versatility and portability. Thus, focusing on the painted panel here facilitates consideration of a number of general issues. Analyzing its history raises two preliminary questions. The first is technical. How was a painted icon made? The second asks how icons interacted with religious viewers, whether individual believers or groups, and whether the encounter was liturgical and spiritual or also engaged a larger community in a political setting, thereby playing two interwoven roles. Ultimately, the question becomes what aspects of these elements could change in new contexts without overstressing the identity of the icon.

The making of icons continues today and modern makers of icons, like historians, base their work on the reports of art conservators and also on the few remaining writings that reveal earlier painters' practices (Vassilaki 2002; Hart 2011). For example, the *Painter's Manual of Dionysius of Fourni* written at Mt. Athos in the eighteenth century includes instructions for the painting of Byzantine icons as well as a guide to iconographic motifs and images types (Hetherington 1974). He describes what we know

from earlier images: a wooden panel as a base, covered with a cloth coated with plaster or gesso on which an established or conventional image was painted, and finally, often, a gold background. But there are technical distinctions over time. Conservators have identified woods used in different regions and sources of colors. Even systems of proportion and the carpentry of individual images can provide information on the localization of their production. Tempting though it might be, the idea that the fifteenth-century Cretan painter Angelos Akotantos' use of drawing can tell us something about earlier practices seems unlikely (Vassilaki 2011). And in contrast to later eras, in early images such as the spectacular Christ Pantokrator at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, color is suspended in encaustic or wax, which can give images an impression of relief (Figure 4.1).

Consideration of an icon's medium, whatever it might be, recalls other factors that affect the interaction between an image and a worshipper, aspects of the environment of worship such as light, sound, and scent, but also the experience of images, sanctuaries, and liturgical texts an individual brings to an encounter with an image (Maguire 1981; Belting 1990; Lidov 2006; Pentcheva 2010; Brubaker and Cunningham 2011). Thus, whatever its maker or commissioner intends, how an image functions is not entirely determined by the intentions of rulers, theologians, and donors, but might vary in the same moment from individual to individual.

Indeed, recent scholars have characterized the interaction between the image and the individual worshipper, between the venerated and the venerator, in complex terms, many derived from current literary and anthropological theory, articulating the ways in which these encounters generate desire and trigger memory and emotion (Nelson 1989; Vikan 1989; Barber 2007; Pentcheva 2010; Betancourt 2016). But this interaction is also transformed by the variety of contexts in which icons are venerated, from private homes to sanctuaries to museums. Even the scale and format of the icon's most familiar form, the portable image painted on wood, vary greatly. An icon might be small enough to be held in hands or placed in a personal chapel or among others in an icon corner (Ševčenko 1991; Tarasov 2002). It might be one of a pair of large, despotic icons of the Virgin and Child and Christ on either side of the entrance through an *iconostasis* (Kalopissi-Verti 2006). It might be a feast icon that could function as a *proskynesis* icon, greeting believers as they enter the sanctuary. It might be a large processional icon, perhaps double-sided. It might be a *vita* icon, depicting a holy figure framed by scenes of his or her life (Chatterjee 2014). As a feast icon depicting a sacred event, it might also be part of an elaborate iconostasis or icon screen, especially in the Late and post-Byzantine periods, or part of an image cycle set on the upper frame of a templon separating the nave from the sanctuary. Individual images might become the emblem of political identity, the sacred pallium of a city, providing protection in time of danger, for example, war or plague, and used in great processions both political, indeed imperial, and liturgical (Cormack 1985; Ševčenko 1991; Carr 1997; Pentcheva 2006). Traditions of the political roles of great Constantinopolitan icons reach back to the period before Iconoclasm, for example that of the image of Christ on the Chalkē Gate and that of the protection of the city from the Avars by the image of the Virgin from the Blachernai in 626 (Cameron

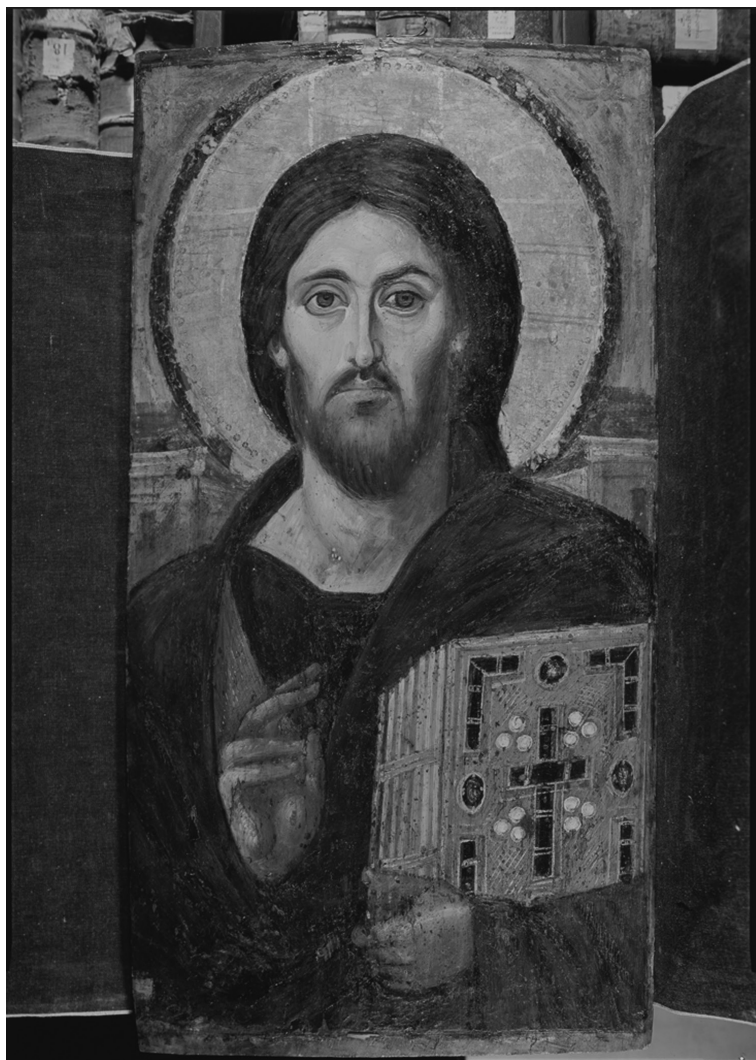


FIGURE 4.1. Christ Pantokrator, first half of the sixth century. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.

1978; Ševčenko 1991; Pentcheva 2006). Over time, individual images might acquire other specific abilities or values, perhaps *apotropaic*. Icons might refer to and make present sacred places such as Mt. Sinai or the Holy Sepulcher (Nelson and Collins 2006). The role of the icon is thus multifaceted: granting individual or group access to the divine, offering physical protection or political and military power.

Despite such variety, the icon appears to have a consistent theological life as an object of veneration offering access to the divine. Even the most adventurous investigations of the encounter between the worshipper and the image still rest on analysis of the

theological texts that emerged from councils before and, more significantly, in the wake of the Iconoclastic Controversy, between 726 and 843 (see Brubaker chapter, this volume). As a basis, scholars cite the writings of Nicholas Cabasilas and John of Damascus and the acts of the Iconoclastic Council of 754 and the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, among others. Useful is the letter of Leo of Chalcedon of 1093/94. A supporter of images, he stressed that images brought with them the presence of the sacred and were not just a reference to the sacred event or personage (Carr 1995a). Gary Vikan and Bissera Pentcheva have offered additional nuances, explicating the imprinting or pressing of the appearance of the sacred into physical matter, transforming its nature (Vikan 1989; Pentcheva 2006). Miraculous images of Christ made without human hands, *acheiropoieta*, conform to this conception. So do images of the Holy Face, drawn from the tradition of the Mandylion of King Abgar, which flourished by the thirteenth century and persisted into the post-Byzantine period, becoming common on Russian icons (Tarasov 2002). Traditions that images of the Virgin were painted by St. Luke appear early. Although most often associated with the *Hodegetria*, in which the Child rests on the left arm of the Virgin as she gestures toward him, other half-length versions of the Virgin and Child have been also identified as the work of St. Luke (*Faith and Power*; Pentcheva 2006). Similarly, images of sacred history offer access to those events, whether on small panels or within the mosaic programs of sanctuaries.

Bringing the venerator near the venerated, icons can also provide movement in sacred time, in *prolepsis* and *analepsis*, flashes forward and back in time (Belting 1990). The *Eleousa* and the *Glykophilousa*, often called the Virgin with the Playing Child or the Virgin of Tenderness—for example, the Adriatic image in the Andreas Pittas Collection (Figure 4.2/Color Plate 1B)—in which the child presses his cheek to the Virgin's sad face, foretell the coming Lamentation over the Crucifixion.

In turn, images of the Lamentation in which the Virgin presses her cheek to the face of the dead Christ recall his infancy. Laments of the Virgin, for example those of Symeon Metaphrastes, contrast the dead Christ with the leaping, playing child (Maguire 1981). Double-sided icons pairing the Virgin and Child with Man of Sorrows evoke these same texts (Carr 1995b).

Indeed, if the theological function of icons remained consistent, it appears that over the course of the empire their configurations and means of conveying experience evolved. The literal representation of emotion found in the *Eleousa* and *Glykophilousa* is difficult to see early on. Given the loss of works to the Iconoclastic Controversy, only glimpses of the icon's early history remain. But despite striking naturalism, some works remaining at St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai such as the brilliant Christ are formal in their frontality and encourage a different sort of interaction than that offered by later panels with more obviously emotional content.

To be sure, images of the Virgin are particularly useful to study, for they remain the most common form of icon from the early Byzantine era to the present. But just when specific images of the Virgin emerged and became dominant is contested among scholars. The identification of the Virgin as the *Theotokos* at the Council of Ephesus in 431 is often cited, and thus Averil Cameron and Thomas Mathews point to dates in



FIGURE 4.2 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 1B). Virgin and Child *Glykophilousa*, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, attributed to Southern Italy or Dalmatian coast. Collection of Dr. Andreas Pittas, Limassol, Cyprus. Photo through courtesy and by permission of Dr. Andreas Pittas.

the pre-Iconoclastic era, but others stress the flowering of her imagery in the era following Iconoclasm (Cameron 1978; Matthews 2016). Pentcheva and Ioli Kalavrezou discuss the emergence of her political role and aspects of her identity as the Theotokos and *Mētēr Theou* and they connect the place of Marian images in public ceremonies and liturgical processions of the Hodēgōn and the Blachernai among other sanctuaries at Constantinople, with her establishment as the protector of the city (Kalavrezou 1990; Bacci 2005; Pentcheva 2006). With the expansion of imperial and popular devotion to powerful, miracle-working images of the Virgin many attributed to the hand of St. Luke, the number of images, not only painted on wood but also executed in other media, increased, often along with their evocation of emotion and theology.

The transformation of icons continued through the Crusader era and into the Palaiologan and post-Byzantine periods, and the images from Latin, Orthodox, and East Christian contexts reveal a similar fluidity. Indeed, in the fourteenth century came the crystallization or codification of some new image types, in particular those of the Virgin and Child. Although many had emerged in the Middle Byzantine period, they became more common and, acquiring titles, became revered while remaining fluid in terms of those titles and even their formal details (Babić 1988; Carr 1995b; Carr 2002b). Among the most familiar are the *Kykkotissa*, the *Glykophilousa*, and the *Galaktotrophousa* or Nursing Virgin. Devotion to specific types and the ability to become close to venerated images through copies encouraged this process.

The new, more literal, portrayal of emotion that had emerged in the twelfth century was certainly not limited to images of the Virgin (Belting 1994; Cormack 2003). It appears in most icons, whether images of Christ, the Virgin, individual saints, or sacred history, whatever their scale or medium. With it came a more direct representation of liturgy and theology, as well as new stylistic and rhetorical means to convey it. The Crucifixion with Deesis and Saints at St. Catherine's at Mt. Sinai shares the experience of mourning at the Crucifixion, activating an experience not unlike that generated by the *Glykophilousa* (Figure 4.3/Color Plate 2).

Another Middle Byzantine shift was the more extensive use of historiated frames. Some portray saints or prophets who address the sacred figure or event of the central panel. Others, whether painted on the panel or included in metal revetments, might also include scenes (Durand 2004; Peers 2004). The frames of icons dedicated to individual saints could represent biographical episodes and posthumous miracles, and such narratives also draw the faithful into sacred history (Chatterjee 2014). Known as *vita* icons, they became widespread not only in the Orthodox world but also in the West; thus, images with scenes made for Sts. Nicholas of Myra and Francis of Assisi appear at about the same time. Whether Latin or Orthodox practice led this development remains unclear and warrants further investigation.

This uncertainty over the introduction of *vita* icons demonstrates that further analysis of the interaction between the Latin and Orthodox worlds, especially the reception of the Byzantine icons in the West whether as diplomatic gifts or as works acquired by travelers, might provide broader insight into the meaning of icons in both traditions. As Cecily Hilsdale has shown, rich layers of significance accumulated on works given and



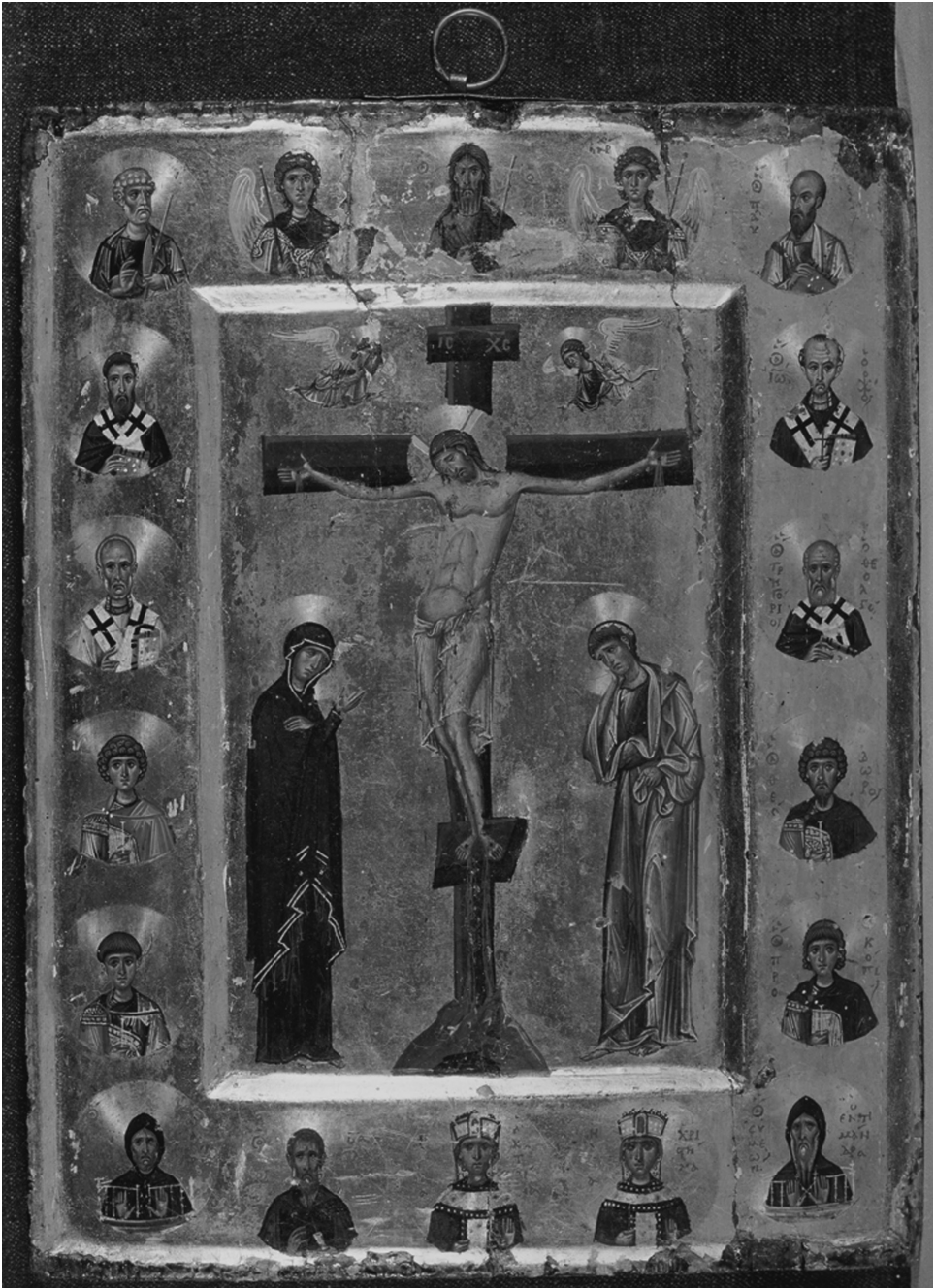


FIGURE 4.3 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 2). Crucifixion with Deesis Surrounded by Saints, ca. 1200. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.

received as gifts, and we can argue that in the process images were actually transformed visually, particularly as they were repeated or copied (Hilsdale 2014). The era of the Crusades generated new icon imagery and style, and icons produced in this context remain the focus of intense scholarly discussion (Georgopoulou chapter, this volume). Many images at Sinai belong to both earlier and later periods and some were undoubtedly commissioned for that very site. Others were likely taken there as votive gifts. Yet scholars have identified other icons there as products of thirteenth-century Crusader artists, although uncertainty regarding their origins remains (Weitzmann 1966; Folda 2005; Nelson and Collins 2006; Gerstel and Nelson 2010). Possible places of their production include Acre, Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, and Sinai itself, and even the validity of the term “Crusader art” is under discussion (Mouriki 1986; Manafis 1990; Caillet and Joubert 2012; Snelders and Immerzeel 2012). To be sure, there are distinctive types: small icons with distinctive relief ornament, *pastiglia*, images of military saints, especially St. George including the superb example in the British Museum (Figure 4.4), and icons in which either the central image or figures on frames contain distinct references to Sinai. The flourishing of such site-specific references and the prevalence of soldier saints demonstrate the continued flexibility of the icon, despite the apparent stability of its votive and devotional role.

Essential, then, to understanding the icon itself is analysis of the reception of the Byzantine icon in Western Europe and by the Latin church. Some Byzantine icons were given as gifts to Western institutions or individual rulers, and the practice of attributing images to the hand of St. Luke continued there. Although it would be extremely productive to explore the problem of whether the Orthodox icon’s concept of veneration translated into actual practice in the Western church, most discussion of the reception of the Byzantine icon in the West has focused on the painting of thirteenth-century Italy, where painters such as Giunta Pisano and Coppo di Marcovaldo appropriated iconographic and political elements of Eastern painting for new, at times local, contexts (Derbes 1989; Corrie 1990; Corrie 1996; and Georgopoulou chapter, this volume). Exploring the political adaptations of Byzantine images, scholars have argued against the concept of perennial Hellenism, which simply envisaged Byzantine art as a source of highly desired classicizing style for Western medieval painters. Attention has also focused on the commercial trade in icons in Northern Europe, and scholars have begun to identify iconographic motifs in the work of leading painters as late as Jan van Eyck (Ainsworth 2004). Most prominent among their presumably venerable models is the so-called Cambrai Madonna, a distinctive version of the *Glykophilousa* executed in a Siennese style that, on its arrival in the North from Rome in the fifteenth century, was nevertheless quickly identified as Greek, valued as an authentic work of St. Luke, and adopted as the emblem of an effort to raise a crusade to rescue Constantinople from the Ottoman Turks.

In the Palaiologan or Late Byzantine period, painters working in the distinctive style that emerged at Constantinople and Thessaloniki produced brilliant images repeating many of these same types (*Faith and Power*). Throughout the Orthodox world as well as elsewhere in the Mediterranean, highly venerated versions of the Virgin and Child,

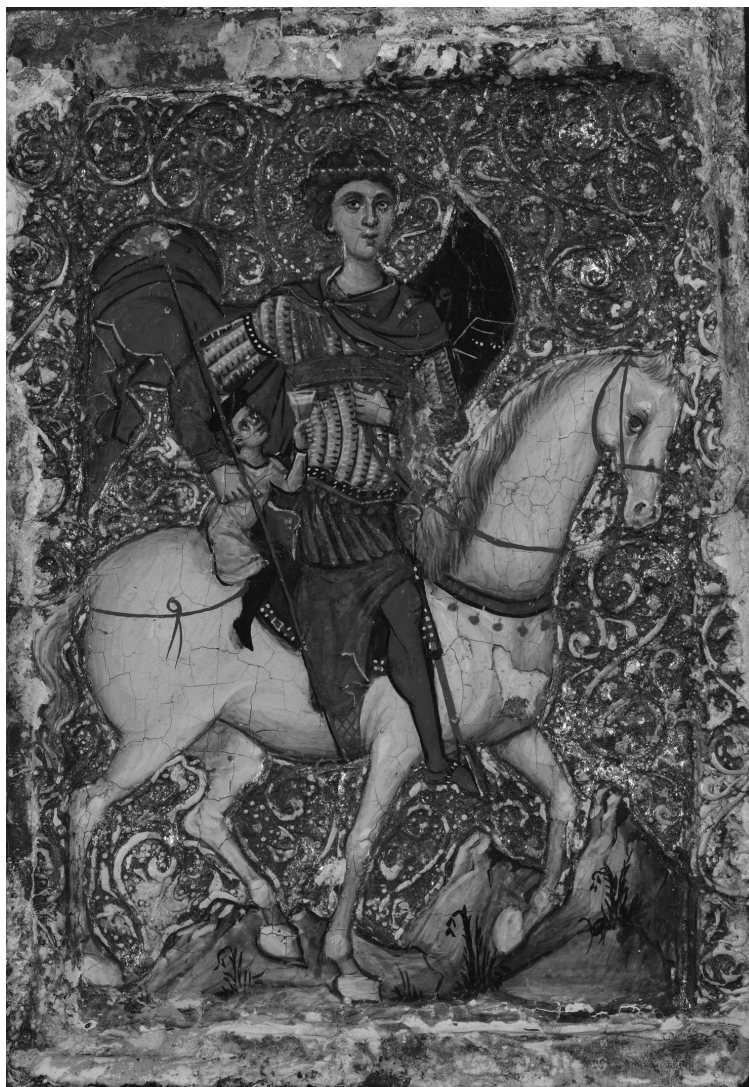


FIGURE 4.4. Icon of St. George, from Lod, Israel mid-thirteenth century. © British Museum.

crystallizing in this period, were replicated to such an extent that the names associated with them, such as *Glykophilousa* and *Pelagonitissa*, were thought until recently to have been both early and firm. In fact, the Cambrai type known throughout the Adriatic had emerged in the thirteenth century in Southern Italy, where it was copied numerous times. It was probably derived from a Byzantine *Kykkotissa* introduced by the Carmelites when the order, founded in the Crusader states, resettled in Europe, first in Southern Italy, after the fall of Jerusalem. The stylistic qualities seen in a leading example now in the Pittas collection connects the type to works on both sides of the Adriatic, where they are often accepted as Byzantine or works by the hand of St. Luke (Staničić

2017). Variations found as far as Spain still retain their association with the Orthodox world, some through claims that they were brought from the Holy Land by returning Crusaders (Blaya Estrada 2000).

Just how fluid in form and international in desire the Byzantine icon had become by the end of the fourteenth century is clear from an image of the Virgin that emerged in the early fourteenth century, known now as the *Konevitsa* (Jääskinen 1971). Here the child sits on the Virgin's left arm and turns to a dove on the right side of the panel. The Virgin wears a veil flung across her shoulder, certainly an Italian invention. Known in numerous early fourteenth-century copies in Italy and Spain, it is best known in a copy that belongs to the Orthodox world. Probably the prototype for all the Orthodox copies, it was likely painted by the Italian Master of the Cambrai Madonna. Accepted as a work by St. Luke, according to tradition it was brought in the late fourteenth century from Mt. Athos to the Monastery of Konev, now in Finland, from which it takes its name. From there it was copied repeatedly, first in Moscow and then elsewhere in Russia especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in painted icons and portable brass and enamel icons (Onasch and Schnieper 1995). Copies by both Russian and Adriatic icon painters were brought to St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai as votive gifts.

Like the international market for icons in Western Europe, the emergence of shared, accepted new images in the later and post-Byzantine eras underscores the broad devotional value of the icon (see Schilb chapter, this volume). It also suggests that by this time, certain characteristics such as the use of the wooden panel, frontal and half-length representation, and the repetition of specific motifs or titles, along with what had come to be considered elements of "Greek style," identified works as fully worthy of veneration (Ainsworth 2004; Vassilaki 2011). Images such as the seventeenth-century Cretan *Noli me Tangere* in the British Museum (see Schilb chapter, this volume, Fig. 17.4), with distinctive qualities such as *chrysography* and Byzantine facial types, demonstrate how such post-Byzantine images maintain their lives as icons despite the addition of Renaissance elements in some figures. Undoubtedly, who had made an image and with what intent also played a role.

But if an image is accepted as an icon, even when the context is a Latin church, what might its significance reveal about the use and function of Byzantine icons? For example, how should scholars understand the history of works of the Italian *maniera greca* re-enshrined as works of St. Luke in Renaissance and Baroque Rome (Wolf 2005)? And what insight might they bring to study of the earlier history of the Byzantine icon? Efforts to distinguish between the Orthodox icon and the Western altarpiece have generated much discussion and are made more problematic by the late medieval production of complex altarpieces for export by painters working on Crete, who were reputed to produce devotional works in distinguishable Latin and Greek styles (see Georgopoulou chapter, this volume). Symptomatic of the overlap in image production is the range of localizations offered for the thirteenth-century Kahn and Mellon Madonnas of the National Gallery in Washington, addressed recently by Jaroslav Folda in his analysis of the deployment of Byzantine *chrysography* by Tuscan painters (Folda 2015). His subtle

distinction between Latin and Orthodox theological goals and his articulation of their visual execution point out the scholarly potential of such comparative investigations.

The versatility, the simultaneous consistency and fluidity of the icon, is also clear in the history of the Russian icon (Cormack and Gaze 1998; Tarasov 2002). Byzantine icons had arrived in centers such as Kiev and Vladimir by the twelfth century, and in later centuries Andrei Rublev among many other Russian painters produced frescoes and icons with distinctively Russian styles and iconography. Once again, familiar types were repeated, often with new titles, such as the Virgin of Smolensk, and others, such as the Konevitsa, with details derived from their Italian origins. Their liturgical and political roles remained. But along with new Russian saints, new images emerged such as the so-called Old Testament Trinity and the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Suffer (Piatnitsky et. al 2000; Tarasov 2002). More elaborate historiated frames and the introduction of small, portable icons expanded avenues for personal devotion. Domestic icon corners in the post-Byzantine Orthodox world demonstrate both the innovation and the permanence of the Orthodox icon in worship and veneration. But centuries-old practices continued such as the dedication of votive images at venerable pilgrimage sites including St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai. The new Russian images of saints typified by Sinai's icons of St. Alexis, the Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia (Figure 4.5), found their way there in the form of painted images, where by liturgical practice, medium, and format, they conform to nearly two millennia of religious practice.

The elasticity of the painted icon, its ability to respond to developments in liturgy and the political and emotional lives of the faithful, and yet retain its authority both within and beyond the borders of the empire, argues for the use of a broad although careful method of comparative study. However altered in its appropriation for new contexts, the icon's use may have been more consistent across borders than scholars on all sides have realized or been willing to admit. Part of the current task is to determine how far the comparisons can be pushed. Although it makes sense to avoid losing sight of the origins of works, focusing only on the differences between works made in Apulia, such as the Limassol Virgin, and in the East or simply attempting to separate the national origins of painters in the Crusader context, may be counterproductive, especially since we know that an Italian image such as the Konevitsa could cross completely into the Orthodox world. Given both the expanse and the variable boundaries of the Byzantine Empire itself and the long afterlife of the Byzantine icon, its study seems best served by a methodology not circumscribed by modern ideas of political and religious borders. Exploring the similarities between canonical Byzantine images, such as Sinai's Christ and Crucifixion and the images that emerged in the wake of Byzantium's intersection with Western interest in icons and the empire's fall in 1453, might provide some further insight into the formation and function—liturgical—of both (Drandaki 2014).



FIGURE 4.5. St. Alexis the Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia with the Holy Face, date unknown. By permission of St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. Photograph published through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.

## REFERENCES

- Acheimastou-Potamianou, M. 1998. *Icons of the Byzantine Museum of Athens* (Athens).
- Ainsworth, M. W. 2004. "À la façon grèçe': The Encounter of Northern Renaissance Artists with Byzantine Icons." In *Faith and Power*, 544–55.
- Babić, G. 1988. "Il modello e la replica nell'arte byzantine delle icone." *Arte Cristiana* 76: 61–78.
- Bacci, M. 2005. "The Legacy of the Hodegetria: Holy Icons and Legends between East and West." In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, edited by M. Vassilaki, 321–36 (Aldershot).
- Bakalova, E. 2000. "The Earliest Surviving Icons from Bulgaria." In *Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors (843–1261)*, edited by O. Z. Pevny, 118–35 (New York).
- Barber, C. 2007. *Contesting the Logic of Painting: Art and Understanding in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Leiden).
- Belting, H. 1990. *The Image and Its Public in the Middle Ages: Form and Function of Early Paintings of the Passion*. Translated by M. Bartusis and R. Meyer (New Rochelle, NY).
- Belting, H. 1994. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*. Translated by E. Jephcott (Chicago).
- Betancourt, R. 2016. "Tempted to Touch: Tactility, Ritual, and Mediation in Byzantine Visuality." *Speculum* 91 (3): 660–89.
- Blaya Estrada, N., ed. 2000. *Oriente en Occidente: Antignos iconos valencianos* (Valencia).
- Brubaker, L., and M. B. Cunningham, eds. 2011. *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Aldershot).  
*Byzantium, 330–1453*.
- Caillet, J.-P., and F. Joubert, eds. 2012. *Orient et Occident méditerranéens au XIIIe siècle: Les programmes picturaux* (Paris).
- Cameron, A. 1978. "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds Its Symbol." *Journal of Theological Studies* N.S. 29, 1: 79–108.
- Carr, A. W. 1995a. "Leo of Chalcedon and the Icons." In *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, edited by D. Mouriki et al., 579–84 (Princeton).
- Carr, A. W. 1995b. "Originality and the Icon: The Panel Painted Icon." In *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music: A Collection of Essays*, edited by A. R. Littlewood, 115–24 (Oxford).
- Carr, A. W. 1997. "Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople." In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by H. Maguire, 81–99 (Washington, DC).
- Carr, A. W. 2002a. "Icons and the Object of Pilgrimage in Middle Byzantine Constantinople." *DOP* 56: 75–92.
- Carr, A. W. 2002b. "The 'Virgin Veiled by God': The Presentation of an Icon on Cyprus." In *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, edited by E. Sears and T. K. Thomas, 214–27 (Ann Arbor).
- Chatterjee, P. 2014. *The Living Icon in Byzantium and Italy: The Vita Image, Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries* (New York).
- Cormack, R. 1985. *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (New York).
- Cormack, R. 1997. *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks, and Shrouds* (London).
- Cormack, R. 2003. "Living Painting." In *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*, edited by E. Jeffreys, 235–53 (Aldershot).
- Cormack, R. 2007. *Icons* (Cambridge, MA).

- Cormack, R., and D. Gaze, eds. 1998. *The Art of Holy Russia: Icons from Moscow, 1400–1600* (London).
- Corrie, R. W. 1990. “The Political Meaning of Coppo di Marcovaldo’s Madonna and Child in Siena.” *Gesta* 29, 1: 61–75.
- Corrie, R. W. 1996. “Coppo di Marcovaldo’s Madonna del Bordone and the Meaning of the Bare-Legged Christ Child in Siena and the East.” *Gesta* 35, 1: 43–66.
- Derbes, A. 1989. “Siena and the Levant in the Later Dugento.” *Gesta* 28, 2: 190–204.
- Drandaki, A. 2014. “A Maniera Greca: Content, Context, and Transformation of a Term.” *Studies in Iconography* 35: 38–72.
- Drandaki, A., D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, and A. Tourta, eds. 2013. *Heaven & Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Durand, J. 2004. “Precious-Metal Icon Revetments.” In *Faith and Power*, 242–57. *Faith and Power*.
- Fisher, E. A. 2012. “Michael Psellos on the ‘Usual’ Miracle at Blachernae, the Law, and Neoplatonism.” In *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, edited by D. Sullivan, E. Fisher, and S. Papaioannou, 187–204 (Leiden).
- Folda, J. 2005. *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, from the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (New York).
- Folda, J., with a contribution by L. J. Wrapson. 2015. *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting: The Virgin and Child Hodegetria and the Art of Chrysography* (New York).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and R. S. Nelson, eds. 2010. *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai* (Turnhout).
- Hart, A. 2011. *Techniques of Icon and Wall Painting: Egg Tempera—Fresco—Secco* (Leominster).
- Hetherington, P. 1974. *The “Painter’s Manual” of Dionysius of Fournas: An English Translation [from the Greek] with Commentary of cod. gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad* (London).
- Hilsdale, C. J. 2014. *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (New York).
- Jääskinen, A. 1971. *The Icon of the Virgin of Konevitsa: A Study of the “Dove Icon” and its Iconographical Background* (Helsinki).
- Kalavrezou, I. 1990. “Images of the Mother of God: When the Virgin Mary Became ‘Meter Theou.’” *DOP* 44: 165–72.
- Kalopissi-Verti, S. 2006. “The Proskyneteria of the Templon and Narthex: Form, Imagery, Spatial Connections, and Reception.” In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 106–32 (Washington, DC).
- Lidov, A., ed. 2006. *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* (Moscow).
- Maguire, H. 1981. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Maguire, H. 1996. *Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Manafis, K. A., ed. 1990. *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine* (Athens).
- Mathews, T., with N. E. Muller. 2016. *The Dawn of Christian Art in Panel Paintings and Icons* (Los Angeles).
- Mouriki, D. 1986. “Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting in Cyprus.” *The Griffon* N.S. 1–2: 9–112.
- Nelson, R. S. 1989. “The Discourse on Icons, Then and Now.” *AH* 12, 2: 145–57.
- Nelson, R. S., and K. M. Collins, eds. 2006. *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles). Exhibition catalogue.



- Newall, D. 2013. "Candida and Post-Byzantine Icons in Late Fifteenth-century Europe." In *Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe*, edited by A. Lymberopoulou and R. Duits, 101–34 (Aldershot).
- Onasch, K., and A. Schnieper. 1995. *Icon: The Fascination and the Reality*. Translated by D. G. Conklin (New York).
- Ousterhout, R., and L. Brubaker, eds. 1995. *The Sacred Image East and West* (Urbana).
- Peers, G. 2004. *Sacred Shock: Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Peers, G. 2015. "Icons." *Oxford Bibliographies*. <http://oxfordbibliographies.com>.
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2006. *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2010. *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Piatnitsky, Y., O. Baddeley, E. Brunner, and M. M. Mango, eds. 2000. *Sinai Byzantium Russia: Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (St. Petersburg).
- Ševčenko, N. P. 1991. "Icons in the Liturgy." *DOP* 45: 45–57.
- Snelders, B., and M. Immerzeel. 2012. "From Cyprus to Syria and Back Again: Artistic Interaction in the Medieval Levant." *Eastern Christian Art: In Its Late Antique and Islamic Contexts* 9: 79–106.
- Sotēriou, G., and M. Sotēriou. 1956. *Icones du Mont Sinai*. 2 vols. (Athens).
- Staničić, Z. D. 2017. *Javni kultovi ikona u Dalamciji* (Split and Zagreb).
- Tarasov, O. 2002. *Icon and Devotion: Sacred Spaces in Imperial Russia*. Translated and edited by R. Milner-Gulland (London).
- Treasures of Mt. Athos*.
- Vassilaki, M., ed. 2000. *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens).
- Vassilaki, M., ed. 2002. *Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique and Technology: Gennadius Library, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 20–21 February 1998* (Heraklion).
- Vassilaki, M., ed. 2011. *The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete* (Athens).
- Vikan, G. 1989. "Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium." *Studies in the History of Art* 20: 47–59.
- Weitzmann, K. 1966. "Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom." *DOP* 20: 49–83.
- Wolf, G. 2005. "Icons and Sites: Cult Images of the Virgin in Medieval Rome." In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, edited by M. Vassilaki, 23–49 (Aldershot).

## CHAPTER 5

---

# ICONOCLASM

---

LESLIE BRUBAKER

## INTRODUCTION

---

ICONOCLASM is the modern name for the period between the 720s and 843 when the role of religious imagery in Byzantium was debated and when, for a time, the production of such imagery was forbidden (Brubaker and Haldon 2011; Brubaker 2012). The word *iconoclasm* is a hybrid, created in the sixteenth century from the Greek words for image, “*icon*,” and broken or breaking, “*klasma*” (that which is broken) or “*klastos*” (broken into pieces) (Bremmer 2008); since the mid-twentieth century, it has been adopted for the Byzantine debates about images (Brubaker 2017). The word *iconoclast*, designating someone opposed to the use of religious images, was used infrequently and always as a pejorative, from the 720s on; it is first found in a letter written by the patriarch Germanos (r. 715–30). The Byzantines themselves referred to the period as *iconomachy*, “the image struggle.” Iconoclasm was, then, specifically concerned with the material image and issues of representation, in particular, portraits of holy people, and, while many other concerns eventually became enveloped in its purview, it is with the role of sacred portraits that any analysis of Byzantine Iconoclasm must begin.

While the role of sacred portraiture had occasioned some discussion in the early church, no ecumenical church councils dealt with religious imagery until the Council of Trullo in 692 (Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995). It appears to have been only then that the issue was considered significant enough to the international Christian community to require legislation. In order to understand why this was so, we must turn to the history of the Christian religious portrait.

## THE CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS PORTRAIT

---

While Christians certainly made religious images from a very early period (see Mathews chapter, this volume), there is little indication that these received any kind of

special veneration, at least under normal circumstances, until the sixth century. One fifth-century text suggests that a portrait of St. Symeon placed over the doorway of a workshop in Rome was believed to protect the goods housed inside (Theodoret, *History of the Monks of Syria*, XXVI.11: PG 82: 1473; *ArtByzEmp*, 41. The sixth-century passage from Agathias included in the *Greek Anthology* concerns an archangel, not a saint; Waltz 1928, 25), but most documentation from the early Christian centuries barely mentions images at all (see *ArtByzEmp*, 4–119). The sixth-century *Life of St. Symeon the Younger*, for example, lists 259 miracles, only two of which feature miraculous icons (van den Ven 1962–1970, 1: 96–98, 139–41; French trans. 2:119–23, 164–65; English trans. *ArtByzEmp*, 134–35). Similarly, the well-known *Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos*, originally written in the mid-seventh century and heavily revised in the centuries thereafter, includes 243 chapters in the most recent edition, but only four of them even mention icons or any other form of religious images (Wortley 1992; Brubaker 1998, 1231–48).

## MIRACLES AND ICONS NOT MADE BY HUMAN HANDS

---

This rather offhand attitude to religious portraiture changed during the sixth and seventh centuries. During the second half of the sixth century, images, often of Christ “not made by human hands” (created miraculously), took on the ability to protect cities from enemy attack. In the 590s, for example, Evagrius credited a famous image of Christ, thought to have been sent by Jesus to King Abgar, with saving Edessa from Persian attack (Cameron 1983); as Cameron notes (84–85); Prokopios does not mention the image, suggesting that it acquired its protective abilities sometime between ca. 550 and the 590s; and in 626 another, perhaps from Kamoulianai in Syria, was carried around the walls of Constantinople by the patriarch Sergios to repel the joint attack of the Avars and, again, the Persians (van Dieten 1972, 174–78; Pentcheva 2002). As these examples strongly hint, sacred portraits seem to have been propelled into prominence by military threats, and the first instances we know of images with supernatural powers were attached to miraculously produced images and absorbed into the broader category of relics, which had performed similar miracles since the fourth or fifth century (Brown 1981; Dal Santo 2012).

## REAL PRESENCE IN ICONS MADE BY HUMAN HANDS

---

Holy portraits “made by human hands” with no miraculous ancestry only begin to appear regularly in the written source material in the last quarter of the seventh century,

more or less at the same time as a great upsurge in apocalyptic literature (Brubaker and Haldon 2011). Both phenomena seem, at least indirectly, to provide responses to continued military insecurity, now coming from half a century of continual losses to the Arabs compounded by Bulgarian attacks. Adamnán, an Irishman writing around 688 and purporting to record tales of a journey to the Holy Land made by Arculf in 683/4, spins a tale claimed to have been “learned from some expert story tellers in Constantinople” about a soldier who, before going into battle, approached “the portrait of the holy confessor George, and began to speak to the portrait as if it were George present in person”; on returning safely, he spoke to him again (Bieler 1965, 231–32; English trans. in Wilkinson 1977, 114–15). The novelty of this conversation—at least to Adamnán—is suggested by the repetition of the phrase reminding us that the soldier spoke to the icon as though St. George “were present in person.” The soldier is said to speak to a portrait of St. George as if it were the saint himself: in the soldier’s mind, the image has within it the real presence of the saint, just as saints were said to be fully present in their tombs or relics (Brown 1981, 11 for the fourth-century Gregory of Nyssa on the relics of St Theodore, from *PG* 46: 740B). If Adamnán’s account has any links with stories told in Constantinople in the 680s, it would suggest that the identification of portraits with the real presence of the saint portrayed had occurred by this time.

It is also around this time, in the writings of Stephen of Bostra (ca. 700), that icons appear in the anti-heretical literature, and Stephen appears also to be the first author to assume *proskynesis* (veneration) before icons (Alexakis 1993; Déroche 1994; Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 49–50). Collections of miracle stories celebrating icons follow in the eighth century (Alexakis 1996, 92–233). It is not hard to understand why: after over half a century of continuous regional conflict that saw the expansion of Arab dominance, Christians blamed themselves for bringing God’s anger upon themselves (Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 778–79). They also, apparently, desired the reassurance of more direct, intimate, and immediate contact with the divine, and that is precisely what icons, newly interpreted as channels of access to the saint portrayed, permitted.

## THE CHURCH RESPONDS: THE COUNCIL IN TRULLO (691/2)

---

The official church response followed swiftly. The Council in Trullo published the first legislation about images in 692. Three laws (canons) were devoted to the issue.

Canon 82 is radical: unlike any other text of the period, Canon 82 explicitly requires artisans and viewers to reject the past (Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 162–64). The Trullo churchmen rejected the earlier symbolic representation of Christ as a lamb:

Therefore, in order that what is perfect, even in paintings, may be portrayed before the eyes of all, we decree that . . . Christ our God, should be set forth in images in

human form, instead of the ancient lamb; in this way we . . . are led to the remembrance of his life in the flesh, his passion and his saving death, and of the redemption which thereby came to the world.

In other words, Christ in human form—the incarnate Christ—must be depicted, because Christ’s redemption of humanity depended on his real human death.

An emphasis on the reality of Christ’s human nature is part of the Christological controversies of the seventh century (Kartsonis 1986, 40–67; Corrigan 1988), and Canon 82 fits neatly, as well, into the assimilation of holy portraits into the cult of saints/relics. Images now, and not before, moved from being commemorative signs (symbols) to real presences, the exact same shift—from symbol to human reality—that Canon 82 records with respect to Christ. Twenty years on, church legislation follows what was evidently devotional practice already in the 680s. Canon 82 is also the basis for the classic justification of religious portraiture developed in the eighth century: Christ’s incarnation meant that he was visible to humans; what is visible may be depicted; to deny images of Christ is to deny the incarnation (Sansterre 1994, 208–9). This, too, plays into the Orthodox Christian response to Islam. As we see in the anti-heretical dialogues, Christians defended Christ’s real human death against Islamic claims that a “likeness” of Christ died on the cross. To counter these, it was essential that the Trullan churchmen validate the reality of Christ’s death, and this was sufficiently important to them that they sacrificed deference to tradition in order to do so.

Canon 100 pursues a somewhat different tack, distinguishing between good and bad types of images. Corrupting images are those that incite pleasure; good images had a different purpose, though it is only in writings of the eighth century that we learn that this is to elicit the tears of purifying sanctity and to induce the emulation of saintly virtues (Brubaker 1999, 19–58). All three Canons demonstrate that, for the first time in Orthodox history, images were important enough to legislate. And, through their concern to restrict the use of representations to communicate real presence, the Trullan churchmen legitimized the assimilation of the cult of images into the cult of relics, an assimilation that remains fundamental to Greek Orthodoxy.

## THE ANTI-IMAGE (ICONOCLAST) REACTION

---

The reaction against treating portraits of sacred people—objects made by humans—in the same way as relics followed in the next generation (Brubaker and Haldon 2001 and 2011; Barber 2002). In the 720s we hear, in the letters of the patriarch Germanos (r. 715–730), of local priests who were removing icons from their churches (Mansi xiii, 100–5, 108–28; Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 94–105). Whether or not the emperor Leo III (r. 717–741) was an active Iconoclast is unclear. He certainly promoted religious images early in his reign, placing a portrait of the Virgin on his personal seal (Nesbitt 2009, 58) and commissioning a set of religious images near the Chalkē (Germanos, writing

around 730, claims that Leo III placed an image of apostles, prophets and the cross in front of the palace: Mansi xiii, 124–28). The story that surfaced around the year 800, about seventy years after the fact, claiming that Leo III removed an icon of Christ from the palace entry portal (the Chalkē gate) in 726 or 730, is almost certainly a later invention (Auzépy 1990). That anti-icon sentiment was growing in the 730s, at least among churchmen, is evident from contemporary documentary sources (the third letter of Germanos, cited earlier: Mansi xiii, 108–28). The first official response, however, did not occur until the middle of the century, when Leo III's son Constantine V (r. 741–775) published a series of Iconoclast documents and shortly thereafter sponsored a specifically Iconoclast church council in 754 (these do not survive except in quotations intended to refute his arguments: Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 179–83, and, for the 754 Council, 189–97).

The key points made by the Iconoclasts were well expressed in the Definition (*Horos*) of the 754 Council, which we know because it was repeated and repudiated in the Acts of the pro-image Council of Nicaea II in 787 (*ArtByzEmp*, 165–68). The anti-image churchmen argued that Christ could not be represented in images, since this would separate his human nature, which could be portrayed, from his divine nature, which could not. They honored the Virgin, saints, and their relics, but maintained that their intercessory power should be accessed through prayer, not through relics or images. Above all, the Iconoclasts celebrated the Trinity, including the Holy Spirit, which conveyed holiness to the bread of holy communion, thus making the eucharist the only “true image” of Christ. The cross, symbol of the crucifixion and of the God-protected and victorious emperors, was the only material representation that the Iconoclasts accepted. Nonetheless, destruction or reworking of liturgical vessels or church hangings bearing other images was forbidden without special permission from the patriarch and the emperor, lest the devil employ this as an excuse by which to insult the church. The underlying premise behind these beliefs, specifically stated in the *Horos*, was the central importance of the Trinity and the rejection of all spiritual authority outside the church. Hence, the clergy became the only authoritative intermediaries between divinity and humanity, and the spoken or chanted word was celebrated.

## THE IMPACT OF THE 754 COUNCIL

---

Results of the council were not dramatic; presumably because the destruction of images was expressly forbidden, there is no evidence of systematic demolition. But this is also in part because, as Phillip Niewöhner has argued, the cross was the key decorative motif of important spaces in churches, especially the apse, in Constantinople and Anatolia in the years leading up to iconoclasm (Niewöhner 2020), so that iconoclasm had little visual impact on the capital and its immediate environs, which are precisely the regions most directly affected by imperial policy. The only definitive example of deliberate destruction appears in the Great Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, where mosaic

images of saints in medallions that had decorated the reception room linking the patriarchal palace and the church were carefully picked out and replaced with crosses set against a blue background, but this only happened in the mid-760s (Cormack and Hawkins 1977, 204–11; for other possible examples of destruction, see Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 206–12). As this indicates, the production of mosaics, frescoes, and other representative media did not wither during the years of Iconoclasm; indeed, one of the most heavily illustrated scientific treatises preserved, with full color miniatures of the night sky, the signs of the zodiac, and the winds, dates to 754, the year of the Iconoclast council (Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 37–40). It was also during this period that minuscule script radically transformed the technology of writing (*ODB* 2, 1377–78). Other developments include new loom technologies (Muthesius 1997; Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 80–108), and building and infrastructure changes (Ousterhout, in Brubaker and Haldon 2001, 17–18).

## THE PRO-IMAGE REACTION

---

But if the economy and material cultural production were apparently flourishing, the pro-image faction continued to argue vigorously against the anti-image faction. They succeeded in restoring icon-veneration at the second Council of Nicaea in 787, the seventh and last ecumenical council. The council was convoked by the patriarch Tarasios (r. 784–806) for the emperor Constantine VI (r. 780–797) and his mother, the empress Eirene (sole r. 797–802), though there is no indication prior to the council that either of the latter had been secret supporters of icons in earlier years.

The pro-image position is clearly expressed in the Acts of the 787 Council, which presented two key points (Mansi xiii; partial English trans. in Sahas 1986). First, the churchmen argued that the veneration of images was sanctioned by tradition. Second, and more important, they made the crucial point that sacred portraits were actually made obligatory by Christ's incarnation. A core tenet of Christianity is that the incarnation was the bodily manifestation of divinity in the form of Christ, which of course allowed the Son to be seen on earth. The pro-image churchmen noted that what can be seen can be portrayed, and that to reject the portrayal of Christ was thus effectively to deny his incarnation (Mansi xiii, 241, 344; Auzépy 1987). Veneration of portraits of Christ was therefore required, and Orthodox Christians were (and still are) required to bow before them, kiss them, illuminate them, and burn incense before them, an honor extended to cover all sacred portraits. Pro-image theology carefully distinguished between images—material representations, created by human hands—and the saintly person depicted, who existed in heaven; hence prayers were directed not to the icon itself, but to the person portrayed on the icon (see Barber 2002). This distinction allowed the pro-image faction to avoid accusations of idolatry, because it meant that no one could be accused of worshipping the wooden panel: instead, prayers were channeled through the image to Christ, the Virgin, or the saint represented, in heaven.

## SECOND ICONOCLASM (815–843) AND MONASTICISM

---

The period usually called “Second Iconoclasm” was inaugurated in 815 by the emperor Leo V (r. 813–820), apparently in emulation of his hero, the former emperor Constantine V. Except for a brief period under the emperor Theophilus (r. 829–842), there was little discussion of image theology, and discipline against pro-image spokesmen was rare. The first half of the ninth century was a period of monastic renewal, and the monastic community, especially those associated with the Stoudion monastery in Constantinople, who had hitherto not displayed any remarkable affinity for icons (indeed, many were Iconoclasts), took on the pro-image cause with considerable vigor (Auzépy 1988; Morris 1995). The early years of the ninth century were, in fact, a period when considerable Byzantine rewriting of history took place, as newly emergent social elites attempted to position themselves strategically in dominant positions (Auzépy 2007; Brubaker and Haldon 2011, 787–99). The theological arguments, however, carried little force now and clearly the Byzantines had more important concerns facing them in the Arab caliphates. Internal schismatic factions apparently no longer seemed relevant, and the first thing that Theophilus’ widow—regent for the young Michael III—did after his death was to arrange the end of Iconoclasm, perhaps at the instigation of the patriarch Methodios (843–847). Methodios called a local church synod in 843 and engineered the final restoration of icon veneration, in what is now called the Triumph of Orthodoxy. There was no immediate upsurge in the production of religious portraiture, but twenty-four years later new and carefully selected sacred images were unveiled in the Great Church, Hagia Sophia. The sermon preached by the patriarch Photios (r. 858–867, 877–886) in 867 to commemorate the inauguration of the first of these, the great image of the Virgin and Child in the apse, has survived, and in it the political implications of the end of the image struggle are as clear as the theological consequences (Mango and Hawkins 1965).

## THE IMPACT OF ICONOMACHY

---

The Acts of the 787 council created, more or less from scratch, a systematic and coherent “cult” of images. Sacred portraits officially occupied a specific place in Orthodox practice: every Orthodox Christian was, and still is, to perform proskynesis (bowing or kneeling) before holy images and to kiss them; and images are to be illuminated and accompanied by the burning of incense. Already in 787, anyone refusing to obey these prescriptions was anathematized and declared a heretic (Mansi xiii, 377D–E). In short, the main impact of Byzantine Iconoclasm was, paradoxically, to establish the enduring importance of icons in orthodox Christianity.



## CONCLUSION

---

There were two significant differences between the anti- and pro-image positions: the authority of sacred portraits and the relative degree of authority held by representatives of the church. The Iconoclasts were what we might today call purists; they permitted no distractions from the central features of Christian belief, the Holy Trinity, and scripture, and they protected the divine by restricting profane access, allowing only the literate clergy to mediate between believers and God. The pro-image churchmen also believed in the Trinity and in the crucial role of scripture, but they allowed more, and more easily accessible, channels to God's grace by sanctioning the intercessory powers of prayers before relics and images, as well as before a priest.

Changing attitudes toward images, with particular emphasis on the role of the sacred portrait, were not restricted to Byzantium, and the phenomenon that we today call Iconoclasm should be seen in a broader context of debates about representation in both the Carolingian West and the Islamic Caliphates. But it was only Byzantine iconomachy, and the devotional practices that led to that debate, that generated the development of an inclusive theology of religious representation, which remains a living force in Orthodox practice to this day. The way forward now, for future research, will be to untangle the complex interrelationship between theology (the theory of image veneration) and devotional practice, and to understand how ideas of power and representation—and, perhaps, gender—inflect and reinforce both.

## REFERENCES

---

- Alexakis, A. 1993. "Stephen of Bostra: Fragmenta contra Iudaeos (CPG 7790)." *JÖB* 43: 45–60.
- Alexakis, A. 1996. *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*. Dumbarton Oaks Studies 34 (Washington, DC).  
*ArtByzEmp*.
- Auzépy, M.-F. 1988. "La place des moines à Nicée II." *Byzantion* 58: 5–21; repr. in Auzépy 2007, 45–57.
- Auzépy, M.-F. 1987. "L'iconodoulie: Défense de l'image ou de la dévotion à l'image?" In *Nicée II 787–1987: Douze siècles d'images religieuses*, edited by F. Boespflug and N. Lossky, 157–65 (Paris); repr. in Auzépy 2007, 37–43.
- Auzépy, M.-F. 1990. "La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcedé de Léon III: Propagande ou réalité?" *Byzantion* 40: 445–92; repr. in Auzépy 2007, 145–78.
- Auzépy, M.-F. 2007. *L'histoire des iconoclastes* (Paris).
- Barber, C. 2002. *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton).
- Bieler, L., ed. 1965. "Itineraria et alia geographica." In *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 175 (Turnhout).
- Bremmer, J. 2008. "Iconoclast, Iconoclastic, and Iconoclasm: Notes toward a Genealogy." *Church History and Religious Culture* 88: 1–17.

- Brown, P. 1981. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago).
- Brubaker, L. 1998. "Icons before Iconoclasm?" *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 45, 1215–54.
- Brubaker, L. 1999. *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*. Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology 6 (Cambridge).
- Brubaker, L. 2012. *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm* (London).
- Brubaker L. 2017. "Ernst Kitzinger and the invention of Byzantine iconoclasm". In *Ernst Kitzinger and the making of medieval art history*, edited by F. Harley-McGowan and H. Maguire (London), 143–52.
- Brubaker, L., and J. Haldon. 2001. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850: The Sources* (Aldershot).
- Brubaker, L., and J. Haldon. 2011. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850: A History* (Cambridge).
- Cameron, A. 1983. "The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story." In *Okeanos, Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko*, Harvard Ukrainian Studies 7, 80–94 (Cambridge, MA); reprinted in eadem, *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium* (Aldershot 1996), essay XI.
- Cormack R., and E. Hawkins. 1977. "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp." *DOP* 31: 177–251.
- Corrigan, K. 1988. "The Witness of John the Baptist on an Early Byzantine Icon in Kiev." *DOP* 42: 1–11.
- Dal Santo, M. 2012. *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford).
- Déroche, V. 1994. "L'Apologie contre les Juifs de Léontios de Néapolis." *Travaux et mémoires* 12: 45–104.
- Kartsonis, A. 1986. *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton).
- Mango, C., and E. Hawkins. 1965. "The Apse Mosaics at St. Sophia at Istanbul." *DOP* 19: 115–51.
- Morris, R. 1995. *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium 843–1118* (Cambridge).
- Muthesius, A. 1997. *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna).
- Nedungatt, G., and M. Featherstone, eds. 1995. *The Council in Trullo Revisited, Kanonika 6* (Rome).
- Nesbitt, J. 2009. *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art 6: Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople*, addenda (Washington, DC).
- Niewöhner, P. 2020. "The Significance of the Cross before, during, and after Iconoclasm. Early Christian Aniconism at Constantinople and in Asia Minor." *DOP* 74: 185–242.
- Pentcheva, B. 2002. "The Supernatural Protector of Constantinople: The Virgin and Her Icons in the Tradition of the Avar Siege." *BMGS* 26: 2–41.
- Sahas, D. 1986. *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto).
- Sansterre, J.-M. 1994. "La parole, le texte et l'image selon les auteurs byzantins des époques iconoclaste et posticonoclaste." *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 41, 197–240 (Spoleto).
- van den Ven, P. 1962–1970. *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon stylite le Jeune*. 2 vols. (Brussels).
- van Dieten, J. L. 1972. *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I. bis Johannes VI* (Amsterdam).
- Waltz, P., ed. 1928. *Anthologie grecque I* (Paris).
- Wilkinson, J. 1977. *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster).
- Wortley, J. 1992. *The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos* (Kalamazoo, MI).



## CHAPTER 6

---

# MAGIC AND BYZANTINE ART

---

JACQUELYN TUERK-STONBERG

### THE INTEGRAL ROLE OF MAGIC IN BYZANTINE STUDIES

---

THE main function of language is to situate the communicator within a community. Whether the language is verbal, visual, or performative, it relates personal narratives to communal ones. The human act of signification—finding and creating meaning in words, images, and performances by relating them to something in the world—is powerful enough to shape experience by intent or accident. The magic of language is the power to express and thus realize one’s feelings (desires, needs, and fears) through recognition by others, whether those others are people, gods, or demons. Textual and visual languages on magical objects represent widespread, multicultural, and fluid communities (Kiyarad, Theis, and Willer 2018). They document the desires, needs, and fears of people within a prescribed and accepted manner of communication. The efficacy of magical amulets resides in the power of visual and verbal language to construct human realities. Similar to the use of icons, the communal use of these other items is evident from the sheer abundance of surviving material culture that attests to large numbers of producers and clients alike.

Though previously considered peripheral to Byzantine history, magic studies bring to light integral and essential questions about Byzantine communities of thought. Studies in magical material culture, developed over several decades, exemplify a general growing interest in previously marginalized topics and a particular growing interest in the function of objects and images (Preisendanz 1928–1931; Bonner 1950; Delatte and Derchain 1964; Betz 1986). *Essays in Byzantine Magic*, edited by Henry Maguire (1995), and Gideon Bohak’s website “Traditions of Magic in Late Antiquity” (posted 1996) brought special visibility to the field, and several catalogues, including one in large format from the British Museum (Michel 2001; also Entwistle and Adams 2011), offer images of hundreds of gems, translated inscriptions, and deciphered iconography. The study of magic itself is a crossroads shaped by various subfields of history including pilgrimage

studies, hagiography, philology, art history, archaeology, and anthropology, among others, thereby representing exciting possibilities in original models as well as collaboration and synthesis in research and thinking. The recent volume, *Magical Gems in Their Contexts* (Endreffy, Nagy, and Spier, eds. 2019) offers a comprehensive overview of Late Antique magic, highlighting many perspectives. Another group of important studies, *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic* (Frankfurter, ed. 2019) addresses questions of magic both historically and theoretically.

Ritual power in the Byzantine period is rooted in a cultural plurality of Greek, Egyptian, Coptic, Roman, Syrian, and Jewish tradition. (Boustan and Sanzo 2017; Bortolani, Furley, Quack, and Nagel 2019). Byzantine magical art and texts in turn played a pivotal role in the adoption and development of Christian doctrine in private households and in individual emotional experience.

## FROM “MAGIC” TO “MAGICAL THINKING”

---

Scholars have debated the term *magic* for generations, labeling as “magical” certain art and texts that engage various practices such as healing, occult sciences, divination, demonology, exorcism, theurgy, dream interpretation, and religion. Byzantine authors, like Theodore Balsamon in his twelfth-century comments on Canon 61 of the Council of Trullo of 691/692, used particular terms including μάντις (soothsayer), λεκανομάντις (dish-diviners), ἑκατόνταρχοι (wise or deceptive men), and γητευταί (people invoking names of martyrs) among many other appellations (Fögen 1995, 100–2). Various Byzantine authors use such terms differently; this is evident when we separate documents of ritual power, such as amuletic texts, from often fanciful documents about ritual power, such as saints’ *vitae*. Thanks to contemporary scholars, however, the term magic is no longer used to mean “incorrect science” or “incorrect religion.” Despite inconsistencies, the term remains useful to indicate mental and linguistic practices that encompass (rather than compete with) Christianity and other authoritative state religions.

As with any complex and lasting term, the meaning of magic has evolved through usage. Today, the term is used to explore gemstones (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2017), jewelry (Spier 1993; Michel 2001; Walker 2002; Mastrocinque 2014), household items (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989), inscriptions on papyri and metals (Betz 1986; Daniel and Maltomini 1990; Kotansky 1994; Meyer and Smith 1994; Meyer and Mirecki 1995), occult sciences (Magdalino and Mavroudi 2006), demonology (Greenfield 1988), medical and other types of amulets (Vikan 1984; Tuerk 1999; Dasen 2014; Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2019), hagiography (Magoulias 1967–1968; Abrahamse 1982), Christian theology (M. Smith 1978; J. Smith 1990), and grave goods (Bollók 2013). Our modern choice of terms shapes the very questions that we bring to these Byzantine ideas, objects, and practices. As visual and textual documents of magic themselves call

attention to the motives and beliefs of the Byzantine actors involved, they reveal what could be called a “history of the individual.” Collective conceptual schemes, as we study them, are naturally based in individual psychologies.

The term *magical thinking*, as opposed to the term *magic*, shifts focus away from a general subject matter to individual actors in their psychologies and their ideological communities because magical thinking is a method of thought, as opposed to magic, a field of thought. Magical thinking is an act of faith in which belief itself is the seat of power, embedded in language. What are the visual, verbal, and performative languages that support magical thinking? What various material objects manifest it? And what are the conceptual schemes that enable it?

If cast as a general conceptual scheme, magical thinking is decipherable in almost any type of historical document alongside other elements of Byzantine methods for instituting truth-value. Thousands of examples survive in healing and protective amulets (whether in clay, metal, papyrus, or stone), jewelry, woven textiles, pottery lamps and bowls, papyrus inscriptions, pilgrimage souvenirs, visual and verbal requests for blessing, and even liturgies and miraculous icons. Typical Byzantine characteristics of magical thinking include placement of objects and images on bodies or in households, relationships between functions and materials, and words and images used in conjunction (Boschung and Bremmer 2015). Complex iconographies include images of deities, saints, and demons; scenes from nature; geometric and symbolic designs; names; commands; and requests. Icons, for example, were credited with winning battles, and votives were hung on icons for physical healing. The most common function for images and words of ritual power, however, was protection. A selection of 124 texts of ancient Christian magic (Meyer and Smith 1994) includes 66 protective or healing spells, 24 curses, 18 enchantments designed for miscellaneous applications such as spells for invisibility, and 16 sexual incantations. One of these is a Coptic manual for making amulets that focuses on curative and protective spells for various diseases and conditions (Meyer and Smith 1994, 83ff.). Inscriptions and images on such pieces indicate the expected function of those pieces; an amulet used to cure uterine bleeding, for example, depicts a uterus (Spier 1993). Likewise, various Byzantine texts that describe amulets indicate expectations for amuletic function. Expectations for what objects and images could do, however, does not explain how they did it, if at all.

## PERSUASIVE ANALOGY AND MAGICAL FUNCTION

---

A dark red hematite amulet made in Byzantine Egypt around the sixth or seventh century was designed to be worn on the body and may have been worn through several

generations (Figures 6.1/Color Plate 3A, and 6.2). It is engraved with an image of Christ healing the Bleeding Woman (a story taken from the Gospel of Mark 5:25–35) and the Gospel inscription: “And a woman being with a flux of blood came, having suffered and having spent much she benefited nothing.” The other side reads: “but rather, had known the source of her flow of blood was dried up in the name of her faith.” On the first side, the text describes the problem of her failed attempts at a cure, whereas the image describes the solution when she touched Christ’s garment and was healed. The other side of the amulet completes the narrative of health alongside a depiction of a female orant in a gesture of thanksgiving. This extra-textual figure perhaps represents the Byzantine(s) who wore this amulet, expressing gratitude for their own expected cure and relocating the sacred narrative into the contemporary time of the wearer (Tuerk 1999). The healing function of this amulet and its combined use of words and images is representative of hundreds of gemstone and metal amulets across the Mediterranean. The existence of this amulet



FIGURES 6.1 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 3A) AND 6.2 (NEXT PAGE). Amulet, incised hematite and silver mount,  $5 \times 3.7 \times 1$  cm, sixth or seventh century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.491, Reproduced from The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection Online Catalog, public domain, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464456/>.



FIGURE 6.2 Continued

demonstrates the opposite of the Gospel text it quotes, suggesting that faith alone was thought not to be sufficient for a cure, and that the amulet with its well-chosen material, words, and images was sought as a supplement.

Medical and scientific documents of the time suggest that analogy was considered suitable for interpreting and shaping experience. Ancient and medieval medical authors participated in a long, cross-pollinating tradition of describing, analyzing, and predicting states of the body and mind through analogical comparisons, rooted in Hippocratic texts. For example, *On Diseases IV* (chs. 51–52) explains the coagulation and separation of humors through the manufacture of butter and cheese; and *Nature of the Child* explains gestation through analogy with the formation of crust on bread (chs. 17 and 29). Late Antique and Early Byzantine doctors and scientists (including Soranus of Ephesus, Galen, Alexander of Tralles, and Theophilus Protospatharius) took Hippocratic works as models for analogical reasoning in experiments, explanations, treatments, and prognosis. These authors continued to be influential throughout the Byzantine period. The Bleeding Woman amulet is made of hematite, just as half a millennium earlier Soranus and Pliny both suggested the use of this red-veined bloodstone



(hematite) to treat uterine bleeding (*Gynaecology* 3.42.3; *Natural History* 36.37.145; 36.8.147). Galen's presence in Byzantine and Arabic editions of ancient Greek medical authors guaranteed the survival of analogical methods through and beyond the period of the Bleeding Woman amulet.

Alongside medical arts, rhetorical arts further exemplify the use of persuasive analogy. *Ekphrasis* itself is the analogical, artistic method in which words may move hearts just as images do. In philosophy too, ancient and Late Antique sources used throughout Byzantium commonly employed analogy as a means to organize knowledge.

The Bleeding Woman amulet embodies medical, scientific, ekphratic, philosophical, and semiotic arts all in one. Byzantine art works and material culture in general engaged analogy to shape concepts of well-being and salvation. Marriage rings depict the Annunciation, Nativity, and Baptism of Christ as an analogy for one's own fertility in marriage (Vikan 1984, 83ff.). Sarcophagus sculpture and catacomb paintings analogize between recorded salvation in sacred narratives and desired salvation in personal stories. It is neither unusual nor surprising to see a desire for salvation expressed through persuasive analogy on the Bleeding Woman amulet. Byzantine art associated the real-life stories of the Byzantine people with the holy story of salvation as spectacularly demonstrated in 1978 by the monumental *Age of Spirituality* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Weitzman 1979). In the instance of this hematite amulet, the persuasive analogy is: may Christ heal the Byzantine woman as He healed in the biblical story.

By understanding the persuasive analogy of the hematite amulet, we can better understand the function of other powerful words and images to persuade and empower. These include hundreds of amulets, a fraction of the thousands that must have originally existed, including papyrus amulets, gems, and metals that take persuasive analogy as their linguistic strategy of choice.

When such a strategy for organizing experience appears in multiple arenas (religion, medicine, rhetoric, magic) and in multiple forms (texts, images, objects, performances), this usually indicates that it is part of a larger cultural assumption. As a characteristic of Byzantine conceptual schemes, persuasive analogy was used to organize knowledge and interpret physical and psychological experience, thus shaping it (Tuerk 1999). It is thus a useful model for interpreting several different types of Byzantine material culture.

## SPEECH ACTS AND MAGICAL FUNCTION

---

Rushing forward, a heroic horseman violently threatens a prostrate baby-snatching demon with the pointed blade of his spear (Patera 2006; Kotansky 2020). His horse leaps over the demon's head, triumphantly kicking its hooves as though to trample the crimes she has committed against pregnant women and newborn babies everywhere. The demon accusingly raises her head to glance directly at us, piercing the picture plane, implicating us as witnesses to her demoralizing defeat. This image appears on a bronze amulet in the Kelsey Museum, surrounded by an inscription from Psalm 91 in

the Hebrew Bible: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the care of the God of heaven; he will say to the Lord ...” The text continues on the other side: “Seal of the Living God, guard from all evil the one who wears this phylactery;” encircling a depiction of Christ within a mandorla, above a lion and snake as mentioned elsewhere in the same psalm (Figures 6.3 and 6.4).

This psalm is noteworthy in that it ends with God speaking back, promising protection. In the center of the amulet are *ring signs*, characters whose arms terminate in tiny rings, which elude modern understanding but may signify the unintelligible speech of angels and demons. They evoke Paul’s description of speaking in tongues (I Corinthians 14:2; Acts 2:1–14, 19:6). If these ring signs represent the voice of an angel, perhaps they carry a message directly from God, as Psalm 91 includes a divine reply. Grammatically, the psalm’s plea for personal safety issues a command in the imperative to the amulet itself. The inscription calls the amulet a “seal,” presumably as a phylactery for keeping out evil and keeping in blessings (see Dasen 2011; Trnka-Amrhein 2020). It transforms the trembling anxieties of parents into the deadly vengeance of a saintly hero. This popular imagery appears on hundreds of Late Antique amulets, and Psalm 91 is by far the most commonly quoted psalm on amulets. Below the image of Christ are the words “holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth,” a quote from the chanting cherubim in Isaiah 6:3; it was used on amulets and in exorcism rites well before its inclusion in a unified Christian Orthodox liturgy (see Pitarakis chapter, this volume).

The amulet’s psychological power against evil lies in the performative interplay of speech-acts, words that initiate or perform the very actions that they describe (Austin 1962, 6; Lesses 1995, 189; Tuerk 2002; Frankfurter 2017; Frankfurter 2019). The inscription on the Kelsey amulet commands in direct address: “Seal of the Living God guard from all evil the one who wears this phylactery.” The inscribed verb “guard” (φύλαξον) does not simply state that the seal guards; rather, it is in the aorist imperative with a transitive meaning, and thus it directly addresses the subject of the sentence and commands it to protect a direct object, the wearer. This inscription, by directly addressing the amuletic seal itself, casts it as an actor and functions as a speech-act. Visually, the inscription surrounds the face of the amulet like a frame, such that all of the framed words and images are “stamped” with the very “seal” that commands their protective resources (Hahn 1980). Psalm 91 declares God’s promise of protection as already fulfilled.

Individual intentions are less important than are collective conventions for the power of speech-acts, for the power of performative acts relies on traditional structures of authority in collective ritual (Austin 1968, 150; Lesses 1995, 188, 192; Tuerk 2002; Nelson 2007). The Kelsey amulet’s textual and visual iconography is widespread and conventional, populated by stock characters in predictable narratives. The words and images convey meaning precisely because they are coded and common.

Collective conventions govern individual psychologies, as suggested by the large number of texts about amulets (such as saints’ vitae, law codes, and scientific and medical texts) that depict amulets as conventionally expected to heal, protect, and curse. The *Life of St. Symeon Salos* reports that he used an amulet to curse a sorceress, hinting that using amulets was a familiar practice (Magoulias 1967–1968, 24off.). The



FIGURES 6.3 AND 6.4. Amulet, bronze, 5.4 cm, 100–500 CE. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan, #26119. Reproduced by permission of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology.

*Life of St. Anthony the Younger* tells that he used a parchment spell to cure infertility. It is recorded that Theodore the Studite praised his mother for not using omens, amulets, or spells to protect in childbirth “like other women,” indicating an assumption of common amulet usage (Abrahamse 1982, 11–12). The widely read and respected authorities Pliny the Elder in *Natural History* (36:37) and Soranus of Ephesus in *Gynaecia* (3:10:42.3) discuss the medical benefits of using amulets to treat uterine bleeding (Tuerk 1999). Conventional beliefs about the efficacy of amulets is further borne out by the great number of surviving objects themselves, whether they are recipe books or individual spells, orthodox or unorthodox, protective or cursing, or whether they were worn around the neck or some other body part. Amulets were everyday commodities across the ancient Mediterranean found in tombs, marketplaces, and homes alike. Russell discusses an inscribed thin sheet of silver and an inscribed glass amulet found at the Early Byzantine city of Anemurium in Turkey, a phylactery tube and two gold eye plaques in a Late Antique tomb at Amman in Jordan, and a cache from a sixth-century tomb in El Jish, Galilee, containing five amulets, fourteen bells, and ninety-one rings, some with *apotropaic* bezels (Russell 1995). These are examples among the some 850 engraved gemstones, metal, and clay tokens in the British Museum, and hundreds more collected at the Coptic Museum and Egyptian Museum in Cairo, Archaeological Museum in Istanbul, Vatican Museums, Monza and Bobbio Duomo Treasuries, various Musei Archeologici Nazionali throughout Italy, the Bibliothèque nationale, Dumbarton Oaks, the Walters Art Museum, Kelsey Museum, Archaeological Museum in Philadelphia, Smart Museum in Chicago, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, among others. Such a formidable archaeological hoard demonstrates a general practice.

## SHOW-ACTS AND MAGICAL FUNCTION

---

Visual language is no less a language than its verbal counterpart, and thus has conventional meanings and social effects. Just as social convention, linguistic practices, and individual psychologies recreate the words on the Kelsey amulet as speech-acts, they also fashion the images as show-acts (Tuerk 2002, 100–54). Images, as well as words, are capable of initiating the very actions that they depict, which is in this case the defeat of a demon. Performative imagery is familiar to us in sacred rituals, patriotic displays, and pornography. As these images initiate action as their essential function, so may other types of show-acts. The image of a triumphant horseman over a trampled demon on the Kelsey amulet describes more than a threat; it delivers that threat to its supposed demonic audience. But as with any language, this image is an oppressive act only if it does, indeed, seem to have an oppressive effect. Whether it does or does not is a matter of perception. If the amulet is to work therapeutically, the human user must assume and perceive the effectiveness of the image. Why else purchase and wear it? And why use images if words are sufficient?

Images enjoy a physical existence through their medium. Figural images more or less resemble a body, and thus embody agency. By presenting the narrative, the image of the holy rider on the Kelsey amulet goes a step further than the accompanying text. Messages in visual language guarantee their outcomes because an image maintains the beginning and end of its narrative simultaneously, as opposed to a written story in which the elements are bound in a particular sequence, whether read or spoken.

Together, the words and images on the Kelsey amulet initiate the very actions that they depict by synthesizing signifier and referent (language and meaning, icon and prototype). Show-acts do more than represent; they present, just as holy icons are commonly believed to do (Tuerk 2008). Byzantine authors regularly tell of depicted subjects acting upon actual objects, of icons acting in the capacity of subjects (talking, bleeding, and crying) toward actual objects (advising, killing, and defeating armies). Beliefs about icons circulated through larger conceptual schemes regarding the power of images in general; the world of signs functions in the world of bodies.

The language of icons, the language of amulets, and indeed ordinary language as well all function through the same Byzantine ways of perceiving and knowing. For example, Sophronius writes about a certain Theophilus who suffered pain in his limbs until, upon instruction from Sts. Cyrus and John in his dream, he discovered a statue of himself with pins that he promptly pulled out to his physical relief (see Magoulias 1967–1968, 236–37 for several such examples). An eight-sided ring was recommended by the physician Alexander of Tralles as a remedy for colic, trusting in the curative powers of the image of an octagon (Vikan 2010, figs. 45–46). In certain Late Antique and Byzantine communities, demons were regarded as real agents of actual deeds. They were also regarded as vulnerable to being slain by effective opponents, namely the powerful images that enact dominance over them, in keeping with more articulated beliefs about icons.

The Kelsey amulet semantically constructs relationships between depicted agents and actual objects, presenting its actions (in the conventional beliefs of its users) beyond mere representation. On one side of the Kelsey amulet is depicted three wild beasts that, according to the Greek text *The Testament of Solomon*, dating from the first through third centuries, are the victorious defeaters of the Evil Eye. The amulet's text, "Seal of the Living God protect the wearer from all evil," corroborates this iconography. Yet the Evil Eye itself is not depicted. The amulet also shows Christ giving a blessing, but not the person receiving it. And lastly, the ring signs are addressed to or from someone powerful, an assumed demonic or angelic presence that is, again, not depicted. The things not present in the image were understood to exist in the world outside of the depiction. The actions of the depicted subjects upon actual objects or audiences constitute show-acts. Evidently, by the great number of surviving amulets, they were relied upon no less and perhaps more than miracle-working icons for practical help by communities of believers.

Visual grammar, like any grammar, does not maintain meaning in signs themselves but rather through communities of believers engaging in practical application. Accordingly one wonders whether or not grammatical function did indeed lead to practical therapeutic success.

## FURTHER DIRECTIONS

---

In the culture of magical thinking, multi-religious imagery was widespread at every level of society, and challenges binary notions of Byzantine orthodoxy versus unorthodoxy (Krueger and Nelson 2016, 7; Bortolani et. al 2019). How might show-act theory introduce new questions for interpreting icons? Studies of amulets have already focused on the history of women; how might they be used to expand a history of the individual? Might connoisseurship (the ability to identify the artist simply by the look of the artwork) indicate not just artists, but also clientele? How far can “magic” go as a way of understanding a cultural mentality? The specific materials from which amulets are made, the production and manipulation of those materials, and their traditionally symbolic and physical qualities are all exciting mines for scholarship (Boschung and Bremmer 2015).

Ancient Greek and Late Antique practices of individual ritual power are documented and edited more widely and thoroughly than Byzantine ones, and provide strong context and reference for future directions in Byzantine magical studies (Faraone and Obbink 1997; Mirecki and Meyer 2001; Shaked 2005; Faraone 2018). Jewish sources have long been referenced as a context for ancient and medieval “magic” and hopefully, with more attention, will be better understood in their integral role (Bohak 2008; Bohak, Harari, and Shaked 2011; Aitken and Paget 2014).

Finally, as the study of magic is truly interdisciplinary, research must evolve ways to integrate different disciplines more seamlessly. Just as the scholarly debate over definitions of “magic” led successfully to paradigm shifts in academic thinking about authority, these same arguments call for parallel developments in scholarly method. Magic studies implicitly call for change in modern assumptions that have shaped the understanding of Byzantium. They also call for attention to scholars’ conflicting worldviews when exploring the terrain of times past.

## REFERENCES

---

- Abrahamse, D. 1982. “Magic and Sorcery in the Hagiography of the Middle Byzantine Period.” *ByzForsch* 8: 3–17.
- Aitken, J. K., and J. C. Paget, eds. 2014. *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge).
- Austin, J. L. 1968 [1962]. *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford).
- Betz, H. D., ed. 1986. *The Greek and Demotic Papyri in Translation* (Chicago).
- Bohak, G. 1996. *Traditions of Magic in Late Antiquity*. Kelsey Museum, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. [www.hti.umich.edu/exhibit/magic](http://www.hti.umich.edu/exhibit/magic).
- Bohak, G. 2008. *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge).
- Bohak, G., Y. Harari, and S. Shaked, eds. 2011. *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition* (Leiden).
- Bollók, Á. 2013. “Apotropaion and Burial in Early Byzantium: Some Preliminary Considerations.” In *Byzanz und das Abendland: Begegnungen zwischen Ost und West*, edited by E. Juhász, 227–241 (Budapest).

- Bonner, C. 1950. *Studies in Magical Amulets: Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor).
- Bortolani, L., W. Furley, J. F. Quack, and S. Nagel, eds. 2019. *Cultural Plurality in Ancient Magical Texts and Practices* (Tübingen).
- Boschung, D., and J. N. Bremmer, eds. 2015. *The Materiality of Magic* (Paderborn).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2017. "The Symbolism of Byzantine Gemstones: Written Sources, Objects and Sympathetic Magic in Byzantium." In *Gemstones in The First Millennium AD: Mines, Trade, Workshops and Symbolism*, edited by A. Hilgner, S. Greiff, and D. Quast, 293–306 (Mainz).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2019. "Protection against Evil in Byzantium: Magical Amulets and Their Survival from the Early to the Late Byzantine Period." In *Visions of Enchantment: Occultism, Magic and Visual Culture*, edited by D. Zamani, J. Noble, and M. Cox, 16–37 (Lopen).
- Boustan, R. and J. Sanzo. 2017. "Christian Magicians, Jewish Magical Idioms, and the Shared Magical Culture of Late Antiquity." *Harvard Theological Review* 110.2: 217–224.
- Daniel, R., and F. Maltomini. 1990. *Supplementum Magicum* (Opladen, Germany).
- Dasen, V. 2011. "Magic and Medicine: the Power of Seals." In *Gems of Heaven: Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity c. AD 200-600*, edited by C. Entwistle and N. Adams, 69–74 (London).
- Dasen, V. 2014. "Healing Images: Gems and Medicine." *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 33.2: 177–91.
- Delatte, A., and P. Derchain. 1964. *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes, Bibliothèque nationale, Département des médailles et antiques* (Paris).
- Endreffy, K., A. M. Nagy, and J. Spier, eds. 2019. *Magical Gems In their Contexts. Proceedings of the International Workshop held in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, 16-18 February 2012* (Rome).
- Entwistle, C. and N. Adams, eds. 2011. *Gems of Heaven: Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity c. AD 200-600* (London).
- Faraone, C. 2018. *The Transformation of Greek Amulets in Roman Imperial Times* (Philadelphia).
- Faraone, C. and D. Obbink 1997. *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford).
- Fögen, M. T. 1995. "Balsamon on Magic: From Roman Secular Law to Byzantine Canon Law." In *Byzantine Magic*, edited by H. Maguire, 99–116 (Washington, DC).
- Frankfurter, D. 2017. "Narratives That Do Things." In *Religion: Narrating Religion*, edited by S. I. Johnston, 95–106 (Farmington Hills, MI).
- Frankfurter, D. 2019a. "Spell and Speech Act: The Magic of the Spoken Word." In *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*, edited by D. Frankfurter, 608–626 (Boston).
- Frankfurter, D., ed. 2019b. *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic* (Boston).
- Greenfield, R. 1988. *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam).
- Hahn, C. 1980. "Loca Sancta Souvenirs." In *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, edited by R. Ousterhout, 85–96 (Urbana, IL).
- Kiyanrad, S., C. Theis, and L. Willer, eds. 2018. *Bild Und Schrift Auf 'magischen' Artefakten* (Boston).
- Kotansky, R. 1994. *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae* (Opladen, Germany).
- Kotansky, R. 2020. "A Bronze 'Rider Saint' Pendant with the Lord's Prayer." *Early Christianity* 11: 3–16.
- Krueger, D. and R. Nelson. 2016. "New Testaments of Byzantium: Seen, Heard, Written, Excerpted, Interpreted." In *The New Testament in Byzantium*, edited by D. Krueger and R. Nelson, 1–20 (Washington, DC).
- Lesses, R. 1995. "The Adjuration of the Prince of the Presence: Performative Utterance in a Jewish Ritual." In *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, edited by M. Meyer and P. Mirecki, 185–206 (New York).
- Magdalino, P., and M. Mavroudi, eds. 2006. *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium* (Geneva).

- Magoulias, H. 1967–1968. “Lives of Byzantine Saints as Sources for Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries.” *Byzantion* 37: 228–69.
- Maguire, H., ed. 1995. *Byzantine Magic* (Washington, DC).
- Maguire, E. D., H. Maguire, and M. Duncan-Flowers. 1989. *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana, IL). Exhibition catalogue.
- Mastrocinque, A. 2014. *Les intailles magiques du Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques, Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris).
- Meyer, M., and P. Mirecki, eds. 1995. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (New York).
- Meyer, M., and R. Smith. 1994. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco).
- Michel, S. 2001. *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*. Edited by P. and H. Zazoff. British Museum (London).
- Mirecki, P., and M. Meyer, eds. 2001. *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden).
- Smith, R. 2007. “Empathic Vision: Looking at and with a Performative Byzantine Miniature.” *AH* 30/4: 489–502.
- Patera, M. 2006. “Gylou, démon et sorcière du monde byzantine au monde néogrec.” *REB* 64: 311–27.
- Preisendanz, K., ed. 1973–1974 [1928–1931]. *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart).
- Russell, J. 1995. “The Archaeological Context of Magic in the Early Byzantine Period.” In *Byzantine Magic*, edited by H. Maguire, 35–50 (Washington, DC).
- Shaked, S., ed. 2005. *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity* (Leiden).
- Smith, J. 1990. *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (London).
- Smith, M. 1978. *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco).
- Spier, J. 1993. “Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets and Their Tradition.” *JWCI* 56: 25–62.
- Trnka-Amrhein, Y. 2020. “The Seal of the Living God: A Christian Amulet in the Chester Beatty Library.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 214: 87–108.
- Tuerk, J. 1999. “An Inscribed Byzantine Amulet and Its Narratives.” *BMGS* 23: 24–42.
- Tuerk, J. 2002. “How to do Things with Words and Images in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.” PhD diss. University of Chicago.
- Tuerk, J. 2008. “Hierotopy, Narrative, and Magical Amulets.” In *Comparative Hierotopy: Studies in the Making of Sacred Space*, vol. 2, edited by A. Lidov, 84–109 (Moscow).
- Vikan, G. 1984. “Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium.” *DOP* 38: 65–86.
- Vikan, G. 2010. *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC).
- Walker, A. 2002. “Myth and Magic in Early Byzantine Marriage Jewelry: The Persistence of Pre-Christian Traditions.” In *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation, and Marriage in Premodern Europe*, edited by A. McClanan and K. Encarnación, 59–78 (New York).
- Weitzmann, K. ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.





## CHAPTER 7

---

# BODILY ADORNMENT AND MODIFICATION IN BYZANTIUM

---

ALICIA WALKER

## INTRODUCTION

---

STUDIES of Byzantine objects of adornment and dress, such as jewelry and clothing, have made crucial contributions to our understanding of typological and technical issues as well as histories of discovery and collection (Yeroulanou 1999; Pritchard 2006; Entwistle and Adams 2010; Bosselman-Ruickbie 2011; Thomas 2016a, 85–141). The focus on such questions is due in part to the circumstances in which jewelry and clothing are typically encountered (in archaeological excavations or as decontextualized, often looted items) as well as the tendency to publish them in archaeological reports and museum and exhibition catalogues. These genres of publication often focus on questions of dating and provenance, descriptions of materials and technical features, or the development of types over time. However, recent scholarship has expanded the study of Byzantine objects and practices of personal adornment by attending to the social meanings and functions of these objects, as well as their contexts of display and use (Yeroulanou 2008; Maguire 2011; Thomas 2016b; Thomas 2019). Furthermore, adornment is understood to encompass a range of practices that included not only embellishment with objects, but also body modification (including temporary and permanent treatment of the hair and skin, as well as the control of diet to alter the shape or proportions of the body or the use of perfume to manipulate the body's scent).

In the modern popular imagination, Byzantine art and culture are commonly associated with luxury and excess. Yet textual sources dating to the earliest centuries of Christian history—from which developed Byzantine attitudes toward adornment—discouraged or even forbade the embellishment of bodies, especially women's bodies. Images of female saints, the Virgin Mary, or Byzantine nuns conventionally project a

social value for material simplicity and personal modesty (Constantinou 2005; Krawiec 2009; Ball 2009–2010). Early Christian leaders and commentators denounced indulgence in luxurious adornment as sinful because it bespoke a lack of humility and an attachment to ephemeral pleasures, evincing the wearer's spiritual corruption. People who enhanced their bodies through cosmetics, opulent jewelry, and elaborate hairstyles were perceived to encourage lust in those who gazed upon them (Hartney 2002; Harlow 2007).

We must keep in mind, however, that many of these textual sources were polemical tracts aimed at countering common practices. Tension between official condemnation of bodily enhancement, on the one hand, and popular embrace of it, on the other, is found throughout Byzantine history. The very ubiquity and forcefulness of criticism should be understood at least in part as a testament to the widespread and persistent reality of such behaviors (Walker 2003). Moreover, consideration of bodily adornment need not be limited to beautiful bodies but can also be extended to include abject ones. While medieval hagiographers frequently enumerate the normative practices of personal enhancement that holy people rejected, stories of Christian ascetics sometimes celebrated corporeal mortification as a form of spiritual adornment made manifest in the flesh.

This essay discusses attitudes toward and practices of bodily adornment in the Early and Middle Byzantine eras. It concentrates on depictions of embellished bodies in art and texts, while attending to the function of objects of adornment and the social meanings they conveyed. Practices of body modification are discussed, especially the treatment of hair and the use of cosmetics and perfumes. I acknowledge a conundrum from the outset: works of art depicting adorned bodies—while no doubt connected to the actual circumstances of Byzantine life—are not documentary sources; rather they are contrivances, shaped by the intentionality of their makers and the limitations of representation (Parani 2003, 2–5; James and Tougher 2005; Dawson 2006, 41–43). While textual sources offer additional evidence through which to balance and refine our understanding of Byzantine realities, they, too, are vulnerable to distortion (Meyer 2009, 10–12). Therefore, recuperation of Byzantine attitudes toward and practices of bodily adornment and modification requires triangulation among objects, images, and textual sources.

## ADORNMENT AS A VICE

---

In the first centuries of Christianity, the new religion struggled to establish itself in the face of persecution. Devout early Christians lived in opposition to political power and the material world, focusing their sights instead on the next life and the salvation it promised (Miller 2009, 3–4). Early Church Fathers renounced pleasures of the flesh, including enhancement through the application of cosmetics and perfumes and embellishment by means of clothing, jewelry, and elaborate hairstyles. The legalization

and subsequent endorsement of Christianity by the Roman imperial government in the fourth century, and the ensuing transformation of Christianity into an official, state-supported religion, marked a crucial turning point in attitudes toward the human body. As the material world was Christianized and no longer necessarily rejected, the human body gained a new role in the expression and pursuit of exemplary behavior and belief (Constantinou 2005). Crucially, Christ's incarnation was understood to have redeemed human flesh (Hunt 2012). The possibility of corporeal sanctity soon extended to martyrs, whose relics memorialized their sacrifices and became touchstones of blessedness and salvation (Miller 2009). Christian commentators emphasized the necessity to make Christian bodies worthy of redemption by patrolling practices of physical adornment and renouncing the cultivation of artificial beauty. Attitudes formulated in the first centuries of Christianity proved remarkably persistent and are evident in the writings of Early and Middle Byzantine authors.

A sixth- or seventh-century wall painting from a tomb in Antinoöpolis, Egypt, which portrays a woman named Theodosia dressed in elaborate garments and jewelry, illustrates the kinds of physical adornment and modification that were typical of the time (Figure 7.1) (Thomas 2016b, 45–46). She is clothed in a luxurious, pale purple cloak with darker purple stripes and a full-length linen tunic embellished at the chest with *clavi* (vertical bands of vibrantly colored wool woven in decorative motifs) and at the hem and wrists with *segmentae* (square shaped ornamental appliqués). In the modern era, tunics of this type were recovered in large numbers from Late Antique graves in Egypt, but they represent a form of fine garment common throughout the Early Byzantine world (Parani 2007, 512–16). In warning against the temptations of so-called false virgins, the early fifth-century theologian and Christian adviser Jerome singles out for criticism women who seek to attract attention by means of tunics with narrow purple stripes or lilac mantles, a description that fits well with Theodosia's garments (Fremantle 1893, 27).

Theodosia's portrait illustrates several categories of bodily adornment that Christian commentators actively censured, including elaborate jewelry, clothing, and hairstyles. She wears necklaces set with radiant gems, gold bangles around her wrists, and pearl pendant earrings, all of which resemble extant examples of Early Byzantine jewelry (Yeroulanou 2008, figs. 123–24, 155). In the writings of the Early Church Fathers, jewelry was among the most scorned devices of adornment (Hartney 2002; Harlow 2007) and is typically presented as a particularly feminine vice. This attitude made all the more aberrant the behavior of the Middle Byzantine empress Zoe. The eleventh-century courtier and man of letters Michael Psellos reported that before her lover was elevated to the throne as Michael IV (r. 1034–1041), Zoe arrayed him in gems and fine raiment like a pagan statue (Renauld 1926, 46). Psellos' condemnation operated on multiple levels, subtly accusing Zoe of idolatry, ridiculing Michael as effeminate, and presenting Zoe in the role of the (active, male) lover, who gifts his (passive, female) beloved with expensive baubles.

More conservative viewers may have disapproved of Theodosia's hairstyle, which is richly ornamented with strings of pearls and gems. Elaborate coiffures



Teodosia fra San Colluto e Santa Maria - Antinoe, Sacello  
(Riproduzione ad acquerello concessa dal Servizio)

FIGURE 7.1. Watercolor of the wall painting depicting Kolluthos, Theodosia, and Maria, Tomb of Theodosia, Antinoöpolis, Egypt, sixth or seventh century. After Mario Salmi, “I dipinti paleocristiani di Antinoe.” In *Scritti dedicati alla memoria di Ippolito Rosellini—nel primo centenario della morte* (4 giugno 1943), a cura dell’Università di Firenze (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1945), pl. h.

incorporating extensions of false hair received special criticism. As Jerome put it, wigs were nothing more than “a tower on your head with tresses not your own” (Fremantle 1893, 265). Ecclesiastical rulings established in the late seventh century at the Council in Trullo commented specifically on the grooming of hair. Canon 96 states: “In the case of those men, therefore, who to the detriment of those who see them arrange the hair on their head in elaborate plaits, offering allurements to unstable souls, we shall treat them paternally, with an appropriate penalty, educating them and teaching them to live prudently; so that once they have given up the error and vanity of material things, they . . . may adorn the inner rather than the outer man with virtues and honest and blameless manners” (Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 177–78). It is clear, however, that extravagant personal grooming did not abate over time; the persistence of body modification among Middle Byzantine men and women is attested by an eleventh- or twelfth-century medical manuscript that provides recipes for removing body hair, combating baldness, and altering the color of tresses (Litavrin 1993, 97–101).

Makeup was common in Byzantium, but was criticized as unnatural. This position perpetuated the attitudes of the Early Church Fathers, who considered cosmetics a defacement of a person's God-given form and condemned them as tools of the devil (Turcan 1971, 110–15). Disapproval of artificial enhancement is prevalent throughout Early and Middle Byzantine commentaries that celebrate women's natural beauty. In his funeral oration for his young daughter, Styliane, Michael Psellos commended her good looks by claiming that “blends and godless mixtures of enchanted potions, or contrivances and inventions of exotic hair-braids, were unable to add anything to such beauty, as natural advantages push artificial ones to the side and show up their ephemeral ‘creators’ as vain and false” (Kaldellis 2006, 127). Similarly, the late twelfth-/early thirteenth-century historian Niketas Choniates praised the empress Bertha-Eirene for her rejection of cosmetics: “Disdaining face powder, eye liner, and eye shadow underneath the eye, and rouge instead of nature's flush, and ascribing such aids to silly women, she was adorned by the virtues to which she was devoted” (Magoulias 1984, 32).

Perfumes were another form of bodily enhancement that received rigorous scrutiny. The late fourth-century saint Pelagia was a prostitute and an actress before receiving a divine calling to abandon her corrupt way of life. A passage in her *vita*, which describes her wantonly parading in public, notes not only her resplendent clothing and jewelry, but also that, as she passed by, “the scent of perfumes and the reek of cosmetics hit everyone in the vicinity” (Brock and Harvey 1987, 43). Attesting to the continuing suspicion of perfumes, Psellos claims that while the empress Zoe had no interest in “the beautiful dresses of her rank,” she was corrupted by her mania for luxurious scents and the precious, exotic materials necessary to produce them. He describes her apartments in the imperial palace to be like a market workshop, where she employed several servants in mixing and bottling her concoctions year round (Renauld 1926, 148).

Byzantine holy women were often celebrated for their rejection of artificial enhancements. The fifth-to-sixth-century saint Matrona of Pergē was married as a young woman and soon gave birth to a daughter, but “after her marriage, she was humble and moderate, taking no care whatsoever for the adornments and cosmetics that worldly women are accustomed to use . . . she neglected all indulgences of the body, neither bathing nor allowing intercourse with her husband” (Featherstone 1996, 19).

Without doubt Christian commentators considered female beauty and sexual allure to be potent and threatening forces. The underlying message of their warnings seems to be that, when unchecked by male control, women might deploy adornment proactively, to undermine the power and authority of men. The twelfth-century historian John Zonaras claimed that the tenth-century empress Theophano, who was of low birth, used her great beauty as a ladder to mount Byzantine society. Whereas Psellos' daughter's natural beauty was a testament to the purity of her soul, Theophano's physical allure was treacherous. Zonaras recounts that Theophano, unsatisfied with her imperial husband Nikephoros II Phokas (r. 963–969), seduced John Tzimiskes, who—assisted by Theophano—subsequently murdered Phokas and usurped the throne (to reign 969–976) (Dindorf and Du Cange 1871, 68, 89). In this account, Theophano's influence depended on her physical attractiveness. Across Byzantine history, beauty, even that

granted by nature, is morally ambivalent: in some cases it reflects inner virtue, in other cases it is a tool for evil (Hatzaki 2009, 33–48).

Works of art depicting heavily adorned women and fastidiously groomed men—as well as preserved examples of ostentatious jewelry and resplendent clothing—demonstrate that prohibitions against bodily adornment and modification were regularly flouted. Indeed, the persistence and forcefulness of criticism against bodily embellishment bears witness to the ubiquity of exactly such activities.

## ADORNMENT AS A VIRTUE: METAPHORS OF SPIRITUAL PURITY

---

Early Christian authors promoted the notion that spiritual purity was a form of metaphorical adornment, an idea that had lasting impact on Orthodox Christian thought. The mid-third-century bishop of Carthage, Cyprian, advised dedicated virgins to embellish their souls with virtuous thoughts and deeds. He perceived exterior and interior beautification to be mutually exclusive, writing, “Having put on silk and purple, they cannot put on Christ; adorned with gold and pearls and necklaces, they have lost the adornments of the heart and soul” (Keenan 1958, 42). A woman’s physical presentation reflected her inner state; it was not enough to be a virgin, one also had to look like one.

Similar notions of bodily adornments functioning as metaphors of spiritual virtue inform depictions of embellished bodies in Byzantine works of art. Even Theodosia’s elaborate garb may have been more than a literal portrayal: her resplendent dress strikingly contrasts the subdued clothing of Maria to her left (although the rich purple hue and golden highlights of Maria’s garment also connote luxury and status). This image could be read as offering two models for Christian women, with Theodosia embracing earthly vanities while Maria renounces them. Yet the figures stand in a paradisaical setting, inviting a metaphoric interpretation. Theodosia might be shown receiving the reward of dazzling jewelry and fine garments in death, a symbolic manifestation of the spiritual prizes gained by a woman dedicated to a virtuous life. In other words, Theodosia and Maria might be two renderings of the same state, with Maria portraying the literal, earthly manifestation of spiritual purity, while Theodosia represents a visual metaphor of the rewards that a devout woman receives in salvation.

Images of richly adorned holy bodies abound in the Early Byzantine era; in particular, martyrs are often arrayed in fine garments, jewels, and gold (Janes 1998, 126–34). In the sixth-century mosaic in the nave of Sant’Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy (Figure 7.2), female martyrs wear rich golden and gem-encrusted garments, and their hair is elaborately styled. These images present a positive conception of bodily adornment, but they operated figuratively and were not intended to validate such practices in everyday life.

While much Christian devotional literature celebrated women who rejected the cultivation of physical beauty, other sources suggest that attitudes were more complex. In



FIGURE 7.2. Female martyrs in procession, mosaic, Church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy, mid-sixth century. Architecture2000/Alamy Stock Photo.

his funeral oration for the twelfth-century princess Anna Komnene, George Tornikios states that Anna's piety did not, as in the case of other women, stem from her being ugly, implying that it was common for women who fell short in norms of physical beauty to distinguish themselves instead through religious zeal (Darrouzès 1970, 248–49). Indeed, Psellos states that the empresses Zoe and Theodora's older sister, Eudokia, whose beauty was ruined as a result of a childhood disease, was dedicated to a monastery, purportedly at her own request (Renauld 1926, 27–28). Such assumptions regarding the motivations behind a woman's piety may explain why so many saints' lives take pains to note that their protagonists possessed remarkable natural beauty, but nonetheless chose to commit themselves to lives of extreme devotion. The tenth-century saint Thomaïs of Lesbos "disclosed her hidden beauty by its external manifestation and revealed the grace of her soul by her bodily features" (Halsall 1996, 302). Yet Thomaïs rejected artificial adornments of any kind and was renowned for weaving cloth to make garments for the poor rather than laboring to clad her own body. Thomaïs' generosity toward the poor contributed, however, to her earthly suffering, for when she gave a beggar in the street the clothes off her back, her husband beat her because he interpreted her philanthropy as profligacy. On this and other occasions, she is said to have worn her bruises like "a garment of salvation": "She adorned herself with wounds as with pearls, with hurts as with most precious stones . . . adorned by insults as with expensive earrings, her beauty was enhanced by the beatings" (306–8). In this instance, the metaphoric association



of martyrdom with material splendor was realized in literal—indeed, disturbingly corporeal—terms.

## BODIES AS SITES FOR THE DISPLAY OF SOCIAL STATUS

---

Items of personal adornment were essential in articulating a person's position in Byzantine society and creating the necessary impression of propriety and order. Some objects held specific social associations that were immediately recognizable to Byzantine audiences (Parani 2007). Throughout Byzantine history, the emperor granted to high-ranking male administrators and courtiers gifts tied to their office or rank. Up to at least the sixth century, the most common of these items was the *fibula*, a large pin that held the *chlamys* (outer cloak) at a man's shoulder. The *Book of Ceremonies*, a tenth-century manual detailing palace protocol, notes that the emperor presented his preferred subjects with various objects depending on rank, including belts, fibulae, cloaks, tunics, and torques (Moffatt and Tall 2012). A frontispiece from an eleventh-century manuscript (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, ms. Coislin 79, fol. 2r), which depicts the emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078-1081) flanked by personified virtues (*above*) and courtiers (*below*), illustrates how robes of distinctive colors and decorations, which were associated with different offices and ranks, served to order members of the court visually and articulate their places in the social hierarchy (Figure 7.3/Color Plate 4).

A well-known pair of sixth-century mosaics from the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, reveals how dress and adornment distinguished individuals of elite social rank in the Early Byzantine era. The mosaics depict the imperial pair Justinian I (r. 527-565) and Theodora in procession with their retinues, which included members of the court, the military, and the clergy. The men are clearly distinguished by their clothing. Courtiers wear the *chlamys* cinched at the shoulder by a *fibula*. Fibulae were fabricated from gold as well as from base metals, like bronze, which was likely polished to achieve a gold-like sheen. Protruding visibly from the wearer's shoulder, they were immediately legible marks of social standing. Belts and rings could indicate office and rank, but the Justinianic Law Code forbade men from commissioning or wearing any adornments that were the privilege of the emperor, including objects decorated with pearls and emeralds (Krueger et al 1967, 433). In contrast to the plain fibulae of his attendants, Justinian's pin is embellished with gems and three large, pendant pearls.

Justinian's regalia also include a dazzling bejeweled crown, red boots embroidered with pearls and gems, and a *chlamys* of rich purple. The dye that produced this color was known as *murex*. Thousands of small sea mollusks were crushed to extract a secretion that rendered a rich and highly stable pigment ranging from deep pink to blue to purple. The right to wear even a small piece of fabric tinted with this costly dye was a mark of social privilege and in some instances imperial preference, as demonstrated by

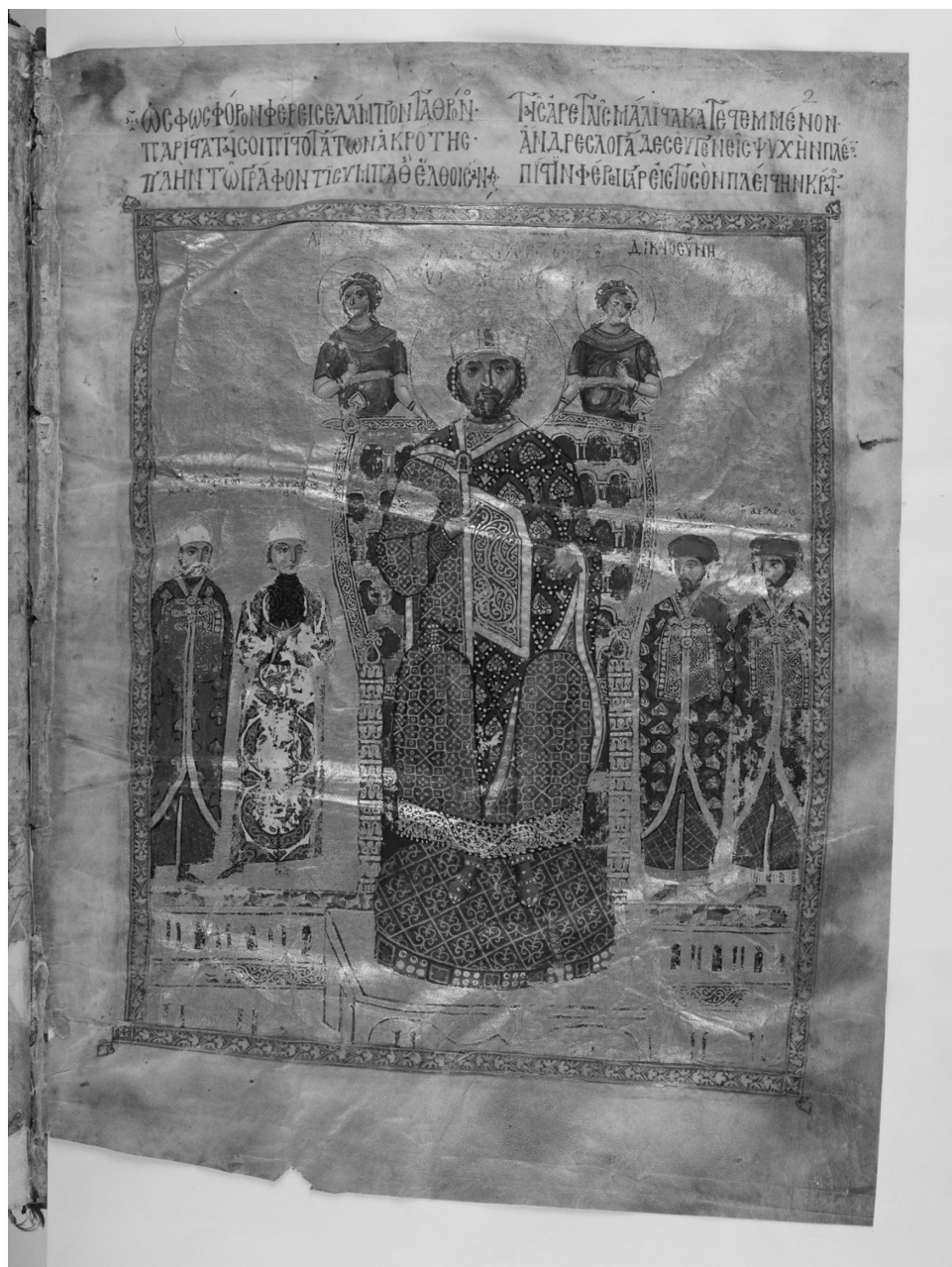


FIGURE 7.3 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 4). Portrait of Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078–1081) flanked by personified virtues (*above*) and courtiers (*below*), tempera and gold on vellum, 42.5 × 31 cm, Byzantine, Constantinople (Istanbul), ca. 1071–1081. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, ms. Coislin 79, fol. 2r.

Justinian's attendants, whose cloaks are adorned with *tablia* (panels) of purple fabric. Only the imperial family was allowed to wear garments fully dyed in murex. Indeed, the Justinianic Law Code affirmed earlier legislation that forbade anyone but the emperor from producing purple cloth (or cloth shot with gold) and strictly controlled the manufacture and distribution of such materials (Krueger et. al 1967, 431–32).

The deacons and bishop preceding Justinian all wear liturgical vestments, but the bishop is distinguished by the insignia of his senior rank: a golden outer robe and the *omophorion* (narrow stole hanging down his chest). The soldiers in the left background wear colorful garments and prominent torques around their necks. Their more elaborate jewelry and clothing do not conform to the social expectations for Byzantine men and may indicate their foreign origin. Conventions of dress and body modification were essential means for communicating a person's status as Byzantine (rather than barbarian). The sixth-century historian Procopius lambasted his contemporaries in Constantinople who adopted foreign fashions in the "Hunnic" style and wore excessively cut garments that billowed in a ridiculous manner (Dewing 1935, 80–81).

The treatment of each group's hair is also distinctive: the monks are shaved around the crown, the courtiers wear their hair cropped above their ears, and the soldiers' hair extends to their chins. As indicated in the rulings of the Council in Trullo, men's hair was considered a meaningful indicator of social standing and authority. Wearing one's hair in the style of a cleric was a privilege accorded only to obedient members of a religious order; those who failed to observe the rules were required to wear their hair as laymen did. Hermetic monks who wore their hair long were required to stay outside of cities; if they were caught fraternizing with regular society, they could be punished by being tonsured and forced to remain in a monastery (Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 124). Procopius indicates that the treatment of hair could also be read as a sign of ethnicity; he criticized men of his time who allowed their facial hair to grow long "as Persians do" or wore their hair in "Hunnic" style (cut short in the front but long in the back) (Dewing 1935, 78–81). While in the Early Byzantine era men tended to be portrayed clean-shaven, after the seventh century beards became the norm. The growing number of beardless eunuchs at the court may have spurred this change; they would have prompted non-eunuch men to affirm their masculinity through the cultivation of facial hair (Tougher 2013, 161).

While the Justinianic Law Code restricted the amount of adornment most men could display, women of high social rank were not prohibited from wearing gems and other precious materials. Their bodies functioned as sites where the wealth of their fathers, husbands, and families could be exhibited without restraint. Although Theodora's female attendants cover their heads in a convention of modesty, they are richly attired in garments of radiant colors and elaborate patterns as well as sumptuous jewelry that recalls extant contemporary examples (Brown 1979; Stolz 2010). As with Justinian, Theodora's profuse adornment reflects the power and resources of the empire as a whole. A chlamys and fibula distinguish her costume from those of the women around her. Although usually associated with male courtiers, these items instead indicate Theodora's imperial status (James and Tougher 2005, 155–56). Therefore, the imperial costumes of

Justinian and Theodora diverge from the gender norms of dress and adornment at Early Byzantine court: his through a degree of extreme embellishment forbidden to men but allowed for elite women, hers by the prominent inclusion the insignia usually reserved for socially elite men.

Ordinarily, gender strongly dictated the forms of adornment a person might adopt, but transvestite female saints reveal how gender identity was actively constructed through objects of adornment and practices of body modification. They not only wore the garments of male monks but also altered the forms of their bodies—by cutting their hair, abstaining from food, and laboring hard—so that they resembled men (Constas 1996; Constantinou 2005, 90–126; Hunt 2012, 63–77; Betancourt 2020, 89–120).

Among the most challenging areas of research on dress and adornment in Byzantium is that of non-elite people. Such individuals were portrayed infrequently; when depicted, they typically appear as secondary figures in narrative—especially biblical—scenes. For this reason, their representations cannot be assumed to reflect reality. Nonetheless, careful scrutiny of works of art and surviving examples of actual garments and ornaments provide some sense of everyday practices (Emmanuel 1995; Parani 2003; Ball 2005, esp. 79–104; Dawson 2006; Parani 2007; Parani 2010; Meyer 2009). For instance, images show that the practical demands of manual labor dictated the design of some clothing, with shepherds, farm workers, and household attendants usually shown in short tunics that could be pulled up around their loins to ease movement. People of lower social standing also ornamented their bodies, albeit with items of jewelry and dress fabricated in simpler designs and less valuable materials.

## THE ICONOGRAPHY OF ADORNMENT: PIETY, PROTECTION, AND EMULATION

---

Throughout Byzantine history, people of all social levels feared malevolent supernatural forces and believed in the defensive power of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. Garments and jewelry with images of holy people were signs of devotion that invoked protection. Some objects specified their functions through inscriptions; in other cases, magical signs protected a wearer (Ball 2016; see Pitarakis chapter, this volume).

Beyond its iconography and inscriptions, the very material of an amulet could empower and protect. Hematite, or bloodstone, was believed to staunch the flow of blood, and a particularly intriguing example depicts the Woman with the Issue of Blood (Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–48) on one side and a female figure raising her hands in prayer on the other (see Tuerk-Stonberg chapter, this volume, Figs. 6.1/Color Plate 3A, 6.2). In addition to achieving its curative purpose through its inscriptions, imagery, and material, this amulet established a potent parallelism between the Byzantine owner of the object and the biblical woman, each of whom presumably suffered from the same disorder and trusted in the power of Christ for help. Furthermore, the female *orant* figure—standing in a posture of

supplication—mirrors the owner of the amulet herself, who sought divine aid through prayer. Byzantine religious advisers encouraged the devout to model themselves after holy people (Constantinou 2005, 14–15; Davis 2005; Thomas 2012). The physical intimacy of amulets further enhanced the reciprocal relationship between the bodies of the figures depicted on such objects and the bodies of their owners.

Emulation of holy people through their depiction on items of dress and adornment is also documented in the mosaic of Theodora in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna. Across the hem of her cloak stride the Three Wise Men with arms outstretched as if presenting gifts to the infant Christ. The mosaic appears beside the altar, and Theodora—a royal figure who offers a gift to Christ—can be understood to imitate the men on her garment. Surviving Early Byzantine garments from Egypt attest to the broad practice of decorating clothing with images of holy people, possibly as a form of devotional mimesis. Still, the fourth-century bishop of Amasea, Asterius, spoke of such practices disparagingly, admonishing his followers to act in accordance with the teachings of Christ rather than to wear His image on their clothing (Davis 2005, 353–54).

In the Early Byzantine period, pagan iconography continued to appear on objects of adornment, which show comparable patterns of visual parallelism, empowered materiality, significant iconography, and meaningful inscriptions. An early seventh-century necklace depicts Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and erotic love, in one of her common types, wringing water from her hair after her birth from the sea or binding it after a bath (Figure 7.4). Her nude body is accentuated by her languorous pose. The gold figure stands on a half-shell of lapis lazuli, and the pendant is further embellished with gems and rock crystal. Suspended over the owner's chest, this object drew an emphatic comparison between the body of Aphrodite and that of the wearer, a connection underscored by the figure of Aphrodite, who also wears a pendant necklace. In addition to epitomizing sexual allure, Aphrodite was recognized for her powers of charisma and persuasiveness. Magical charms called on her assistance not only in matters of love and sex but also in business and even the courtroom (Kaimakis 1976, 45, 64).

The fourth-century encyclopedia of magical gems, the *Koiranides* (*Cyranides*) states that lapis lazuli is dedicated to Aphrodite and specifies that charms used to gain her favor should be carved in this stone (Kaimakis 1976, 85). This necklace thus secured the powers of the goddess by using a material that was especially potent in attracting her. The pendant epitomizes the very threats that commentators perceived in bodily adornment. By evoking Aphrodite, the wearer assimilated herself to the seductress par excellence and bluntly stated an intention to control others by means of her own beautiful body and charisma.

In the Middle Byzantine era, jewelry no longer actively employed pagan, mythological imagery and was instead decorated predominantly with motifs of natural abundance and images of holy people, foremost the Virgin Mary (Yeroulanou 2000). In many instances, these objects functioned as apotropaic and auspicious amulets. Their inscriptions invoke protection and assistance from the figures depicted. Among the most popular items of personal adornment were *enkolpia*, pendants worn over the chest that took various forms, including miniature icons, compact reliquaries, carved stones,



FIGURE 7.4. Necklace with pendant of Aphrodite *Anadyomene*, gold, lapis lazuli, ruby, rock crystal, ca. 43 × 20 × 2 cm (ca. 17 × 8 × 1 in), early seventh century, Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington, DC, BZ.1928.6. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.

or inscribed gems (see Pitarakis chapter, this volume, Figs. 33.1, 33.3). These objects were intimately associated with the people who owned them, serving as foci of religious devotion and self-reflection. In some instances, they were employed as personal surrogates, standing in as sureties of obligation or serving as memorial devices displayed at tombs (Drpić 2018).

Middle Byzantine jewelry and clothing also reveal interest in foreign sources. Pseudo-Arabic motifs—which employ the general forms of Arabic letters, but are illegible—were inspired by Islamic models and became popular in jewelry of the tenth and eleventh centuries; a related body of iconography depicts animals that show stylistic affinity with medieval Islamic art (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 114–17, 400–2, figs. 149–63). The use of turbans and *tiraz* (decorative bands often displaying Arabic inscriptions) points to

a similar impact of Islamic models on Middle Byzantine clothing, while elements of Western European and Bulgarian styles also feature in dress of this era (Ball 2005, 57–78). This fashion for the foreign might be correlated with an increasingly international economy in luxury goods (and their lower market derivatives) that emerged in the tenth century and burgeoned in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is difficult to know what impressions these exoticizing items of adornment made; perhaps they associated the wearer with a cosmopolitan attitude, claiming an aesthetic horizon that was rooted in, but extended beyond, Byzantine culture and society (Ball 2005; Walker 2012).

## CONCLUSION

---

This brief survey demonstrates not only the ubiquity and persistence of personal adornment in Byzantium but also the array of social meanings and functions that such practices conveyed. According to Christian authors, in order to avoid potential vices, the embellishment of bodies had to be performed within acceptable bounds and to serve virtuous intentions. Yet many people tested these limits, engaging in personal adornment and modification in ways that challenged or even openly transgressed the proscriptions laid down by the Early Church Fathers and perpetuated across Byzantine history.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

---

Research on Byzantine clothing tends to be pursued by different groups of scholars from those studying Byzantine jewelry. This is in part because these studies focus on analyses of style, technique, and materials, which are media-specific (on this point, see Williams 2019a). An important direction for future research will be to unify the studies of these diverse items of embellishment—as well as to bring them into dialogue with practices of body modification—so as to allow for a synthetic consideration of the function and experience of objects and materials placed on Byzantine bodies (as demonstrated by Williams 2019b). Most studies of clothing, jewelry, and other relevant categories of the material culture of bodily adornment still privilege questions of dating, provenance, and technical analysis over function or social meanings. Of course, both approaches are essential to produce a full understanding of bodily adornment and modification because consideration of function and social meaning depends on the chronological and geographical localization of objects used in these practices. Questions of dating and provenance are extremely difficult to answer, however, and cannot be determined through analysis of materials, style, or techniques of production alone. Archaeological evidence must continue to be consulted and reevaluated to shed light on these issues, and textual evidence must be scrutinized to yield new perspectives on social attitudes

toward items of adornment and the evidence of their use. Crucial to these efforts is a broader recognition that clothing and jewelry are not frivolous things or “minor arts,” but instead offer essential, perhaps unique evidence for consideration of topics such as social identity and hierarchy, gender and sexuality, technologies of production, devotion, health and well-being, and morality (Thomas 2016a).

## REFERENCES

- Brock, S., and S. Ashbrook Harvey, trans. 1987. *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley).
- Constas, N. 1996. “Life of St. Mary/Marinos.” In *Holy Women of Byzantium*, edited by A.-M. Talbot, 1–12 (Washington, DC).
- Darrrouzès, J. 1970. *Georges et Démétrios Tornikès, lettres et discours* (Paris).
- Dewing, H. B., trans. 1935. *Procopius: The Anecdota or Secret History* (Cambridge, MA).
- Dindorf, L., and C. Du Cange, eds. 1871. *Joannes Zonaras: Epitome Historiarum*, vol. 4 (Leipzig).
- Featherstone, J., trans. 1996. “Life of St. Matrona of Perge.” In *Holy Women of Byzantium*, edited by A.-M. Talbot, 13–64 (Washington, DC).
- Fremantle, W. H., et. al, trans. 1893. *The Principal Works of St. Jerome* (Oxford).
- Halsall, P., trans. 1996. “Life of St. Thomaïs of Lesbos.” In *Holy Women of Byzantium*, edited by A.-M. Talbot, 291–322 (Washington, DC).
- Kaimakis, D., ed. 1976. *Die Kyraniden* (Meisenheim am Glan).
- Kaldellis, A., ed. and trans. 2006. *Mothers and Sons, Father and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos* (Notre Dame, IN).
- Keenan, A., trans. 1958. “The Dress of Virgins.” In Saint Cyprian. *Treatises*, edited by R. Deferrari, 23–52 (New York).
- Krueger, P., T. Mommsen, R. Schöll, and W. Kroll. 1967. *Codex Justinianus* (Dublin).
- Magoulias, H., trans. 1984. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit).
- Moffatt A., and M. Tall, eds. and trans. 2012. *Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus: The Book of Ceremonies*, 2 vols. (Canberra).
- Nedungatt, G., and M. Featherstone. 1995. *The Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome).
- Renauld, É., ed. and trans. 1926. *Michel Psellos: Chronographie, ou, Histoire d'un siècle de Byzance*, 976–1077, vol. 1 (Paris).
- Turcan, M., ed. and trans. 1971. *Tertullian: La toilette des femmes* (Paris).

## Secondary Sources

- Ball, J. 2005. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting* (New York).
- Ball, J. 2009–2010. “Decoding the Habit of the Byzantine Nun.” *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 27–28: 25–52.
- Ball, J. 2016. “Charms: Protective and Auspicious Motifs.” In *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity*, edited by T. Thomas, 54–64 (Princeton).
- Betancourt, R. 2020. *Byzantine Intersectionality: Sexuality, Gender, and Race in the Middle Ages* (Princeton; Oxford).
- Bosselman-Ruickbie, A. 2011. *Byzantinischer Schmuck des 9. bis frühen 13. Jahrhunderts* (Weisbaden).



- Brown, K. R. 1979. "The Mosaics of San Vitale: Evidence for the Attribution of Some Early Byzantine Jewelry to Court Workshops." *Gesta* 18, 1: 57–62.
- Constantinou, S. 2005. *Female Corporeal Performances: Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women* (Uppsala).
- Davis, S. 2005. "Fashioning a Divine Body: Coptic Christology and Ritualized Dress." *Harvard Theological Review* 98, 3: 335–62.
- Dawson, T. 2006. "Propriety, Practicality and Pleasure: the Parameters of Women's Dress in Byzantium, A.D. 100–1200." In *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, 800–1200*, edited by L. Garland, 41–76 (Aldershot).
- Drpić, I. 2018. "The Enkolpion: Object, Agency, Self." *Gesta* 57, 2: 197–224.
- Emmanuel, M. 1995. "Some Notes on the External Appearance of Ordinary Women in Byzantium: Hairstyles, Headdresses: Text and Iconography." *Byzantinoslavica* 56, 3: 769–78.
- Entwistle, C., and N. Adams, eds. 2010. *Intelligible Beauty. Recent Research on Byzantine Jewellery* (London).
- Harlow, M. 2007. "The Impossible Art of Dressing to Please: Jerome and the Rhetoric of Dress." In *Objects in Context, Objects in Use: Material Spatiality in Late Antiquity*, edited by L. Lavan, E. Swift, and T. Putzeys, 531–49 (Leiden).
- Hartney, A. 2002. "Dedicated Followers of Fashion: John Chrysostom on Female Dress." In *Women's Dress in the Ancient Greek World*, edited by L. Llewellyn-Jones, 243–58 (Swansea).
- Hatzaki, M. 2009. *Beauty and the Male Body in Byzantium: Perceptions and Representations in Art and Text* (New York).
- Hunt, H. 2012. *Clothed in the Body: Asceticism, the Body, and the Spiritual in the Late Antique Era* (Farnham).
- James, L., and S. Tougher. 2005. "Get Your Kit On!: Some Issues in the Depiction of Clothing in Byzantium." In *The Clothed Body in the Ancient World*, edited by L. Cleland, M. Harlow, and L. Llewellyn-Jones, 154–61 (Oxford).
- Janes, Dominic. 1998. *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge).
- Krawiec, R. 2009. "'Garments of Salvation': Representations of Monastic Clothing in Late Antiquity." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17: 125–50.
- Litavrin, G. 1993. "Malade et Médecin à Byzance XIe–XIVe Siècles: Remarques sur le Cod. Plut. VII 19 de la Bibliothèque de Lorenzo de Medici à Florence." In *Maladie et Société à Byzance*, edited by E. Platlagean, 97–101 (Spoleto).
- Maguire, H. 2011. "Personal Adornment: Glory, Vainglory, and Insecurity." In *Transition to Christianity. Art of Late Antiquity, 3rd–7th Century AD*, edited by A. Lazaridou, 43–47 (New York).
- Meyer, M. 2009. *An Obscure Portrait: Imaging Women's Reality in Byzantine Art* (London).
- Miller, P. 2009. *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia).
- Parani, M. 2003. *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden).
- Parani, M. 2007. "Defining Personal Space: Dress and Accessories in Late Antiquity." In *Objects in Context, Objects in Use*, edited by L. Lavan, E. Swift, and T. Putzeys, 497–529 (Leiden).
- Parani, M. 2010. "Byzantine Jewellery: The Evidence from Byzantine Legal Documents." In *Intelligible Beauty. Recent Research on Byzantine Jewellery*, edited by C. Entwistle and N. Adams, 186–92 (London).
- Pritchard, F. 2006. *Clothing Culture: Dress in Egypt in the First Millennium AD* (Manchester).

- Stolz, Y. 2010. "The Evidence for Jewellery Production in Constantinople in the Early Byzantine Period." In *Intelligible Beauty: Recent Research on Byzantine Jewellery*, edited by C. Entwistle and N. Adams, 33–39 (London).
- Thomas, T. 2012. "Mimetic Devotion and Dress in Some Monastic Portraits from the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit." *Coptica* 11: 37–79.
- Thomas, T., ed. 2016a. *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity* (Princeton).
- Thomas, T. 2016b. "Material Meaning in Late Antiquity." In *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity*, edited by T. Thomas, 20–53 (Princeton).
- Thomas, T. 2019. "The Honorific Mantle as Furnishing for the Household Memory Theater in Late Antiquity: A Case Study from the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit." In *Catalogue of the Textiles in the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection*, edited by G. Bühl and E. D. Williams (Washington, DC), <https://www.doaks.org/resources/textiles/essays/thomas>.
- Tougher, S. 2013. "Bearding Byzantium: Masculinity, Eunuchs and the Byzantine Life Course." In *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society*, edited by B. Neil and L. Garland, 153–66 (Farnham).
- Walker, A. 2003. "Adornment: Enhancing the Body, Neglecting the Soul?" In *Byzantine Women and Their World*, edited by I. Kalavrezou, 233–39 (Cambridge, MA).
- Walker, A. 2012. "Islamicizing Motifs in Byzantine Lead Seals: Exoticizing Style and the Expression of Identity." *Medieval History Journal* 15, 2: 381–408.
- Williams, E. D. 2019a. "Dressing a Part: Jewelry as Fashion in the Medieval Middle East." In *Ambassadors, Artists, Theologians: Byzantine Relations with the Near East from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries*, edited by J. Pahlitzsch and Z. Chitwood, 143–52 (Mainz).
- Williams, E. D. 2019b. "Appealing to the Senses: Experiencing Adornment in the Early Medieval Eastern Mediterranean." In *Sensory Reflections: Traces of Experience in Medieval Artifacts*, edited by F. Griffiths and E. Starkey, 77–96 (Berlin).
- Yeroulanou, A. 1999. *Diatrita: Gold Pierced-Work Jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th Century* (Athens).
- Yeroulanou, A. 2000. "The Mother of God in Jewellery." In *The Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by M. Vasilaki, 227–36 (Milan).
- Yeroulanou, A. 2008. "Jewellery and Adornment." In *Byzantium 330–1453*.



## CHAPTER 8

---

# SECULAR ART

---

MARIA G. PARANI

## INTRODUCTION

---

ACCORDING to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term *secular* denotes anything “belonging to the world and its affairs as distinguished from the church and religion” and is “chiefly used as a negative term, with the meaning non-ecclesiastical, non-religious, or non-sacred.” Related to this is the definition of secular as anything “of or belonging to the present or visible world as distinguished from the eternal or spiritual world.” Lastly, when related to art and architecture, the term is used to describe any work “not concerned with or devoted to the service of religion” or “not dedicated to religious uses.” As regards Byzantium, where the spiritual was considered very much present and active in the material world and where Christianity was one of the pillars of Byzantine identity and a shaping force of Byzantine civilization, speaking of secular art turns into a challenge, while in some cases is downright questionable. Especially when faced with imperial art, it becomes immediately apparent that in Byzantium, the concept of the “sacred” encompassed a much wider spectrum than the “religious,” a fact that introduces additional complications in attempts to draw firm boundaries between the sacred and the profane (Spieser 2004, 278).

Because of such concerns, there have been calls to move beyond what some view as a false dichotomy imposed on the study of Byzantine art and to adopt other analytical categories more appropriate to this culture and society. However, given how entrenched the concept of the secular is in the modern intellectual makeup, the search for defining and understanding profane art in Byzantium continues. Sometimes, behind this persistence one may detect a need by Byzantinists to prove that Byzantium was not an unrelieved theocracy and that the Byzantines, in addition to their striving for spiritual salvation, also had a taste for life’s pleasures and an appreciation of artistic forms other than those in direct service of church and faith (Woodfin 2016, 155). Recent studies, nonetheless, are opening up new ways of examining profane works of art, appreciating their visual qualities and significant potential. Such works are now

revealed as potentially expressive of the same concerns and values that may be detected not only in other manifestations of the secular in Byzantium, such as Middle and Late Byzantine romances, but also in religious art and literature as well (Walker 2011; Woodfin 2016). Considering the historiography of Byzantine art history, which has always privileged the sacred and viewed secular artworks as aberrations, mindless or misunderstood imitations of Antique models, or politically motivated responses to foreign impulses, this affirmation of their role as an integral component of Byzantine creativity is an important step forward. Modern scholars, rather than being deterred by the fluid boundaries between the sacred and the secular realms, now venture to explore how these elements came together not simply in the same spaces or spheres of activity but also in single works of art, creating a synthesis that resonated affectively with their Byzantine audience's worldview, lived experiences, and expectations (Kirin 2005; Walker and Luyster 2009). Even so, the question of definition remains: how does one define "secular art" in Byzantium? What forms of artistic production can be examined under this rubric and on the basis of which criteria? And, are there any distinctive qualities that differentiate "secular" works of art from their religious counterparts?

## ATTEMPTS AT DEFINITIONS

---

While the emergence of secular art as an analytical category in Byzantine and Western medieval art history has been traced by a number of scholars (Cutler 1995, 315–17; Netzer 2006; Walker and Luyster 2009, 3–8), the actual object of its investigation remains elusive. Attempts to define secular art are primarily based either on the context of use and, by extension, the function of an artwork or on the content of its decoration. According to the first criterion, secular art is art not in direct service of the Christian faith, not related to ecclesiastical rituals, and not functioning in an outright religious setting (Grabar 1971). It is art associated with the domestic, commercial, military, civic, and political spheres. Dress and jewelry, domestic architecture and its monumental decoration, household furniture and furnishings, tablewares and domestic lighting devices, civic buildings and fortifications, portraiture and honorific monuments, and the technological wonders or automata of the imperial court can all be considered under this broad definition. However, this classification strains under the realities of living in Byzantium. For instance, is an icon used in a domestic context for private devotions a secular object? We would instinctively answer "no," but would have fewer reservations about labeling a personal ring adorned with the image of the Virgin as secular. And, what of palaces decorated with the feats of biblical, mythological, and historical heroic figures side by side, such as the house of Leo Sikountenos in twelfth-century Thessaloniki (*ArtByzEmp*, 225–26)? Would the space be "sacralized" by the presence of these religious themes or would the images be "secularized" because they adorned the walls of a house rather than a church? We tend to forget when we introduce such dilemmas in our discourse that pagan Greco-Roman, biblical Jewish, and Christian Byzantine traditions were all

integrated into the Byzantine narrative of world history and that to a Byzantine viewer there was no paradox in seeing David, Achilles, and Alexander depicted together (Boeck 2015, 30–31).

Other approaches prioritize content over domain as the principal criterion for categorization. Secular art is defined by its non-religious topics, such as scenes from daily life (e.g., the hunt, fishing, agricultural activities, market scenes, games, etc.), scenes of love, military exploits and historic events, portraits and representations of exemplary figures, images inspired by the natural world and the worlds of science and technology, mythological scenes and personifications (Figure 8.1), exotica (loans from other artistic traditions), and non-figural ornament. In the effort to fit Byzantine artistic production on either side of the profane/religious divide, scholars are forced to include imperial art and portraiture into the secular category, although the perception of the emperor as God's vicar on earth and the sacred aura associated with the imperial person makes this label for imperial art highly problematic (Cutler 1995, 316–17; Spieser 2004, 280–82; Spieser 2006, 386–88).



FIGURE 8.1. Wall-hanging with Hestia *Polyolbos*. Wool, 136.5 × 114 cm, first half of the sixth century. Dumbarton Oaks, BZ.1929.1. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.

Woodfin recently proposed the definition of secular art as art “whose iconography is *predominantly* driven by factors outside the theology of the church or the ideology of the political system” (Woodfin 2016, 155 [his emphasis]). Imperial art, however, is not the only problematic case in classifying Byzantine art as sacred or secular on the basis of iconography alone. For instance, how do the portraits of lay individuals, clergy, and monastics that appear in churches or religious manuscripts, often with holy figures, fit into this scheme? And should the seventh-century domestic silver plates adorned with the biblical story of David and thought to allude to Emperor Heraclius’ (r. 610–641) struggle against the Persians (Leader-Newby 2004, 173–216) be treated as sacred art?

It becomes apparent that the Byzantine material is resistant to a rigid dichotomy and that the standard criteria of classification—content and context—are not adequate to delineate clear boundaries. The only area in which Byzantine scholars feel some confidence in this contrast is in architecture, where “secular architecture” encompasses all structures with a non-ecclesiastical ritual function, from the domiciles of the rich and the poor to baths to city walls (see Snively and Arvanitopoulos chapters, this volume). As for the portable media, those with non-religious iconography and/or non-religious use are often considered under headings such as “arts of the court” or “luxury arts,” given that the best known extant examples, especially from the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, are made of precious materials and display an iconography that is thought to reflect the milieu of the Byzantine elite. While this avoids the artificial division, it implies that the taste for objects adorned with non-religious themes was associated exclusively with the wealthy and educated levels of Byzantine society, especially the court. Comparable subject matter on artifacts of cheaper materials, such as bone or clay, shows that this was not necessarily the case and begs for a different approach that would study non-religious themes across media, disengaging them from one particular social stratum.

In order to address such difficulties, some scholars have focused not on iconography, medium, and context, but on certain qualities that transcend these traditional analytical tools. Cutler proposed concentrating on how most Byzantine art functioned in supporting and perpetuating imperial and religious institutions by sublimating specific iconographic choices—often inspired by current temporal concerns—into timeless statements about authority, earthly or divine (Cutler 1995; Anderson chapter, this volume). Maguire and Dauterman Maguire, on the other hand, opted for a different bipolar classification in which “official art,” religious art as sanctioned and controlled by the church after Iconoclasm, is contrasted to “unofficial art,” beyond church control. This latter was distinguished by a “profane aesthetic,” a predilection for certain themes or modes of representation that are encountered across media and domains. This aesthetic favored innovation and invention manifested in the depiction of composite fantastical creatures such as sphinxes and sirens, sexual innuendo and nudity as an object of mockery and derision, and disorderly movement and wild abandon. However, beyond entertainment and nonconformity, unofficial art was also

the locus of spiritual power of a different nature, potent in the struggle against evil (Tuerk-Stonberg and Pitarakis chapters, this volume). This power led to another characteristic, a lack of definition: in Byzantine contexts, figures inspired from the repertory of Greco-Roman art and pagan mythology were not identified by inscriptions in order to avoid the risk of veneration like icons of saints, who were always named. Lastly, it is implied that unofficial art exhibited a greater degree of freedom of choice and creativity on the part of artists and patrons (Maguire 1999; Dauterman Maguire and Maguire 2007; Maguire 2010).

Exploration of the qualities of profane artistic expression and the attempt to understand its motivations, creative processes, and the multiple ways in which it functioned in and was appreciated by Byzantine society is certainly the way forward. Questions of innovation and originality (Littlewood 1995), humor (Cutler 1984/1985), love and sexuality (Walker 2011), engagement with pagan imagery, Classical art, and the artistic traditions of Byzantium's neighbors (especially the Islamic world) (Hanson 2010; Walker 2012; Chatterjee 2013b; Chatterjee 2014/2015) are all themes that can be fruitfully explored further. Equally, the relationship of sacred and profane needs to be better understood; non-ecclesiastical art is generally considered to be diverting and pleasurable to the senses as well as the mind, erudite, subversive, irreverent, and though not deprived of symbolic complexity or a spiritual dimension, still unable to lead the viewer to the contemplation and understanding "of higher things" as religious art was wont to do (Walker 2012, 152–64). Nonetheless, the identification of strategies of visualization and viewing developed for post-Iconoclastic religious art in works with profane iconography (Chatterjee 2013b; Chatterjee 2014/2015) illustrates a creative form of crossing over from one sphere to the other (Newman 2013). Though such exchanges were likely facilitated by the fact that the creators and the audience of both forms of artistic expression were more or less the same, the circumstances under which they took place and the ways in which the direction, intensity, and nature of such crossovers may have varied from one period to the next remain ill-understood. A more nuanced and open-minded discussion of the relationship between these two artistic spheres remains a *desideratum* of future research.

The assumption that secular art was characterized by greater subjectivity and that, in contrast to religious art, it allowed artists and patrons greater margin to experiment and to pursue their interests and needs likewise requires careful evaluation, not least because the social and cultural norms and expectations within which both the creators and viewers of Byzantine art operated could be as confining as church dogma and tradition. Questions of personal creativity and tastes and the freedom to express them are intimately connected to the broader issue of mentalities and their evolution over time. Maguire's study of Byzantine attitudes toward the depiction of the natural world (2012) highlights a definite shift between the Early and Middle Byzantine periods, a shift that is ascribed to the impact of Iconoclasm. It would be interesting to explore whether (and how and why) the treatment of other themes traditionally thought of as secular was affected by the gradual transformation of early into medieval Byzantium.



## BYZANTINE SECULAR ART IN CONTEXT

---

Other contributions in the present volume consider works of art usually identified as secular within the framework of specific media or functional categories or domains. To probe further into the role of the profane in Byzantine art and society and draw attention to the complexities involved in its study, the discussion turns to a brief survey of secular art or themes in three different spheres: the church, the city, and the home (for the imperial court, see Anderson chapter, this volume).

### In the Church

In addition to their primary religious function, churches and monasteries served as hubs of social and economic activities; they were often encircled by non-religious structures like hospices, hospitals, and baths. Beyond the pale of cities, monastic foundations were protected by their own defensive walls and towers, comparable in design and building techniques to civic and military fortifications (see Arvanitopoulos chapter, this volume). The secular, however, was not simply peripheral to the church building. Parts of a church could be used for non-liturgical functions: in the most important sanctuaries of Constantinople, for instance, there were separate spaces designated for the emperor's use, where he could change his attire, receive members of his court, and even share a meal (Strube 1973, 72–81). The floors of early basilicas were often covered with mosaics depicting images from the natural world, scenes from daily life, representations of cities, personifications and other mythological figures and hybrid creatures, as well as portraits of donors or supplicants (Hachlili 2009). Though in the church's context these images were symbolically reinterpreted, they acquired immediacy and were comprehensible thanks to the experiences of the viewers in the world outside the church, including their familiarity with the vocabulary of contemporary art in non-ecclesiastical contexts by which these depictions were inspired.

Such images were no longer considered acceptable for the decoration of ecclesiastical buildings following Iconoclasm, for their use had been advocated by the Iconoclasts at the expense of images of Christ and the saints (*ArtByzEmp*, 152–53). This, however, did not lead to their complete disappearance, but rather to their transformation and their harnessing to the ecclesiastical worldview. Depictions of the natural world continued but in an abstracted geometrical form, while stylized vegetal ornaments remained a standard component of the decoration of the upper surfaces of church walls, evoking paradise (Maguire 2012). Animals, birds, and fantastical creatures appeared on sculptural architectural elements and components of liturgical furnishings, especially templon screens (Sklavou Mauroeide 1999), liturgical manuscripts (Dauterman Maguire and Maguire 2007, 5–28, esp. 18–23), and precious textiles put to a variety of uses, including altar and reliquary covers (see Woodfin chapter, this volume). Vignettes

or individual figures from the profane sphere were either incorporated into religious compositions, like the shepherds in the Nativity or musicians and dancers in the Mocking of Christ, or were depicted independently as illustrations of sermons and as marginalia in manuscripts with liturgical content. Evoking the profane world and its pleasures in sacred contexts had different functions, from being humorous and ironic to dramatizing and enhancing Christ's suffering for the faithful. As a number of trail-blazing studies have demonstrated, exploring the meanings of such images and the specific conditions that gave rise to them forms a rewarding path for specialized research (Dauterman Maguire and Maguire 2007, 151–53; Kepetzi 2014; Boeck 2017).

Churches also served as settings for the display of imperial portraits. While in the sixth century, Justinian and Theodora were portrayed in the bema of San Vitale in Ravenna, Middle and Late Byzantine imperial portraits are often found in peripheral or liminal spaces, like the narthex, or at thresholds, perhaps in an attempt to articulate in spatial terms the emperor's exceptional hierarchical position in between heaven and earth. In the twelfth century, the *meḡas hetaireiarchēs* George Palaiologos had a group of seven Byzantine emperors, from whom his family was descended, depicted side by side in the vestibule (narthex?) of the monastic church he had founded (*ArtByzEmp*, 228), in a manner evocative of the portrayal of standing saints in the lower zone of church walls. Next to the imperial portraits, Palaiologos had the military victories of the reigning emperor Manuel I (r. 1143–1180) depicted. Comparable narrative scenes expounding imperial victory and triumph on the walls of churches have not come down to us. However, the portrayal of the generals Melias and John Tzimiskes, armed and on horseback at the head of a file of standing military saints on the north wall of the Pigeon House Church at Çavuşin (Cappadocia), as if leading a triumphal procession toward Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) who is portrayed in the prothesis apse (Thierry 1985), implies that such martial themes were not deemed inappropriate for the walls of Byzantine churches (Figure 8.2). In Byzantium, after all, the ultimate source of imperial victory was God. On the other hand, the celebration of imperial power through imagery associated with the Hippodrome appears to have been avoided in ecclesiastical contexts, having received vehement criticism by the Iconophiles (*ArtByzEmp*, 152–53). It is only beyond the political borders of the empire, at St. Sophia in mid-eleventh-century Kiev, that a non-Byzantine ruler would introduce the representation of such spectacles in a church—albeit in a space where only he and selected members of his court had access—in a bid to strengthen his own authority and prestige through association with Byzantium (Boeck 2009; Boeck 2017).

In addition to emperors, some laypersons, monastics, and clerics also had their portraits displayed on the walls, on icons, or on sarcophagi within churches. Though in principle this was an act of piety and faith, a prayer for salvation captured in pigment or stone for eternity, concerns of religious commemoration and the perpetuation of social memory were interwoven in these portrayals. It was indeed in the external trappings of their worldly identity—their distinctive dress and adornment—that these individuals chose to be portrayed and remembered. Extensions of this identity were also the gifts that pious donors offered to a church, not all of which were sacred in nature. Among the

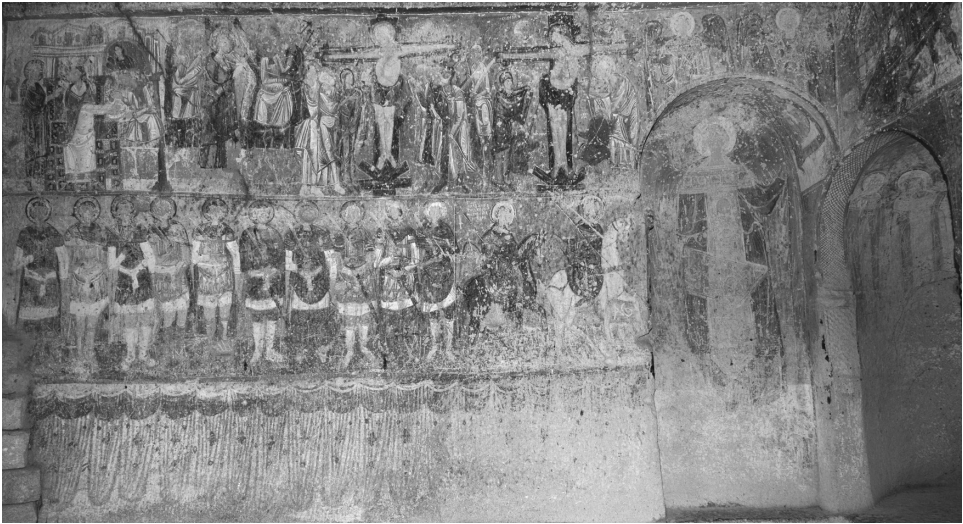


FIGURE 8.2. General view of the north wall with the *magistros* Melias and Ioannes Tzimiskes on horseback at the head of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia in middle register, Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin. Fresco, 963–969. Photo courtesy of Tolga Uyar.

books that Eustathios Boilas, a magnate of Byzantine Asia Minor, had donated to the church he had founded in the eleventh century were two chronicles, a book on dream interpretation, Aesop's *Fables*, and the Late Roman romance *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Whether religious or secular in content, it was Boilas' wish that none of the books he donated be sold, but that they remained in the church to be used "for reading and learning" (Lemerle 1977, 25).

## In the City

The city is considered here not as an economic and artistic center for the production of secular artworks, but as an institutional and physical entity meant to fulfill a range of secular and religious functions that were embodied in its monumental topography. Though Byzantine cities served such functions throughout the Byzantine millennium, until recently discussions of urban topography, architecture, and decoration in the context of "secular art" were commonly confined to the Early Byzantine period, both because we know more about it through the archaeological record and because we tend to associate the idea of "secular" in an urban context with the civic values and traditions of the Greco-Roman world that are thought to have faded after the seventh century. Secular structures contributed to the beautification of a city and the articulation of its discrete identity by means of their own impressive decoration and as spaces where other works of art were exhibited. The investment in such monuments was considered expressive of traditional secular civic values. In Constantinople, new construction and

monuments set up especially by emperors were experienced in tandem with an assortment of ancient works of art, including statues and relief sculptures of pagan gods and heroes, *spolia* from all over the empire (see Kiilerich chapter, this volume). Christianity also became a visible component of urban space and life. In addition to impressive ecclesiastical complexes inserted into the city grid and gradually becoming the preferred foci of individual benefactions, religious symbols and images were introduced into the decoration of non-religious buildings and public spaces; the depiction of the Ecumenical Councils at the Milion, marking the beginning of the main central street of Constantinople, is a prime example (*ArtByzEmp*, 141). Not least, religious processions through the city, incorporating imperial and other civic sites as well as churches, helped to forge a city's complex identity in which the secular and sacred were tightly interwoven (Brubaker 2013).

In recent decades, developments in Middle and Late Byzantine urbanism have also been receiving systematic attention, and relevant studies have highlighted the importance of exploring the built environment of cities in connection to the changing historical and social realities to which it responded rather than comparing it unfavorably to the glories of the Early Byzantine past (Ćurčić and Hadjistryphonos 1997). In the empire's old cities, urban building projects involving new construction were limited to fortifications, churches, monasteries, and private residences. City walls were likewise the most impressive secular constructions in new urban settlements founded after the seventh century. Discussions of the aesthetic and symbolic dimensions of the ornamental treatment of the façades of medieval fortifications and other secular structures with the incorporation of *spolia*, inscriptions, and a variety of brick ornaments, including crosses and family monograms, are yielding interesting results concerning how both collective and individual tastes and identities found new modalities of expression within the medieval urban fabric (Bakirtzis 2010).

In cities old and new, provision for urban amenities, such as public baths, hospices, and hospitals, was now frequently associated with the church. Few such buildings are attested to archaeologically, thus their appearance and decoration remain largely unknown (Ousterhout 2015). Finds from the site of the hospice of Sampson in Constantinople included glazed wall-tiles with non-figural ornament, comparable to types encountered in the capital's churches during the tenth century (Figure 8.3) (Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001, 176–82).

Portraits of emperors and private individuals were often set up in churches and private residences rather than public squares and city thoroughfares and were executed in pigment or glass tesserae rather than marble and bronze. Even in Constantinople, the erection of public monuments to celebrate imperial triumphs became exceptional. An interesting example, which also touches upon the issues of the reception of Classical art and the perception of history in medieval Byzantium, was the bedecking of the exterior Golden Gate with a pastiche of spoliated reliefs with mythological representations, possibly in the tenth century (Figure 8.4) (Mango 2000, 181–86). In the capital as well as in other cities of the empire, ancient secular monuments continued to be part of the urban landscape and of the inhabitants' daily experience. The complex attitudes of medieval



FIGURE 8.3. Fragment of colonnette with a pattern of peacock feathers from the Hospital of Sampson, Constantinople. Glazed ceramic, tenth century. Dumbarton Oaks, BZ.1962.36.7. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.

Byzantines toward these ubiquitous physical remnants of the past and their engagement with them at the practical, aesthetic, ideological, and spiritual level remain fertile fields for further investigation (James 1996; Magdalino 2012).

## At Home

A person cannot be separated from his or her faith, and Byzantine houses accommodated activities connected to religion, while some were even provided with chapels for the household's devotional needs. Still, the home is the main domain with which the taste for and display of secular art is customarily associated. This, however, should not be taken to imply that secular art in the domestic sphere was necessarily personal or private



**FIGURE 8.4.** The south wall of the outer Golden Gate, Constantinople, with the vestiges of spoliated sculptural decoration. Photo: Ch. Bouras. © Benaki Museum Photographic Archive, Athens, Greece [t20s12\_6].

in character. Like the church or city, the home, whether palatial or more humble, was an arena where status and social hierarchical relations were negotiated and public personas were constructed and projected. Social rank, financial circumstances, and personal aspirations and choices informed the architectural articulation and use of domestic space as well as its decoration and household effects, common vehicles for non-religious imagery. During the Early Byzantine period, popular themes in the domestic sphere included scenes from life at home (bathing, adornment, feasting) and the country (picnics, agricultural and bucolic activities, hunting, fishing), circus games, images inspired by nature (animals, birds, fish, trees, and flowers), personifications (terrestrial, temporal, cosmic, or of abstract concepts), and mythological figures and narrative

scenes, especially featuring Dionysus and his followers and Greek heroes, like Hercules and Achilles (see Connor chapter, this volume). Such themes were encountered across media, from floor mosaics, silver, ceramic and glass tablewares, silver and copper alloy bathing equipment, ivory boxes (Figure 34.2) and metal and clay lamps, to wall hangings, curtains, and tunics, a diffusion that in turn implies that they were enjoyed by a wide social spectrum. Beyond a celebration of the pleasures of life appreciated by all, such themes could also be expounded to express other more subtle and personalized messages according to specific context, envisioned function, and the interests and ambitions of individual owners. Such issues have been explored in great depth, particularly in the case of mythological representations on domestic silver plate, which have been related to their owners' desire to appear erudite and cultured rather than to any lingering faith in pagan gods (Leader-Newby 2004). In fact, examples in which mythological representations and Christian symbols and inscriptions were used concurrently indicate that Christian identity and pagan imagery were not mutually exclusive (Figure 8.5/Color Plate 3B).



**FIGURE 8.5 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 3B).** Lid of the Projecta Casket, with portrait of married couple, three panels with mythological scenes, and one panel with a procession towards the baths. Inscription: SECVNDE ET PROIECTA VIVATIS IN CHRISTO (Secundus and Proiecta, live in Christ). Silver-gilt, h. 28.6 cm, max. l. 56, max. w. 48.8 cm., ca. 380. British Museum, reg. no. 1866, 1229.1. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Christian symbols and imagery on quotidian objects in the domestic sphere, from garments to clay lamps, can be observed already from the fourth century on. This trend has been ascribed to the wish to invoke God's protection on the household and to the increasing confidence of Christians to advertise their faith in the wake of the triumph of the church. Still, that this infiltration is observable especially in the context of personal adornment, communal dining, and domestic lighting implies that there may have been other motivations behind such crossings over, touching upon shifting mentalities and spiritual concerns that merit further exploration. Such an investigation would also be worth expanding into the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, when, for reasons that still need to be elucidated, Christian symbols and images disappear almost completely from domestic categories such as lay garments, silver and ceramic tablewares, and lamps, though they do continue to appear on personal jewelry (Kirin 2005, 13–14).

While the study of domestic architecture in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods is advancing (Sigalos 2004; Kalas 2009; see Snively and Arvanitopoulos chapters, this volume), the nature of the archaeological remains forces us to fall back on the written sources for glimpses of the monumental decoration of medieval houses and palaces executed in fresco, mosaic, or stucco. Though textual references are few, one recognizes certain familiar themes: images of gardens and playful putti, the pleasures of the feast, feats of exemplary biblical and mythical figures to which are now added the heroic deeds of the Byzantine emperor, and allegorical images of a didactic nature (*ArtByzEmp*, 197, 224–26, 234–35, 247–48; Gerstel chapter, this volume). In order to visualize the appearance of these lost monumental ensembles, we may turn to an array of extant artifacts adorned with comparable secular imagery. Patterned silks, illuminated manuscripts, wooden caskets reveted with ivory and bone plaques, silver vessels, and enamel glass and ceramic tablewares display the repertory of secular themes enjoyed in medieval Byzantium: images of triumphant emperors and characters of the mythical and historic past; warriors and victorious charioteers; farmers and hunters; revelers and lovers; musicians and dancers; acrobats and mimes; mischievous cupids and funny old half-naked men; stately personifications and fantastical creatures; fruit- and blossom-laden trees; and a variety of birds and animals and animal fights (see Havice, Bosselmann-Ruickbie, and Woodfin chapters, this volume). With the notable exception of ceramics (see Papanikola-Bakirtzi chapter, this volume), such objects are far from numerous and mostly lack an archaeological provenance that would have helped elucidate their function and context of use. Equally frustrating for the modern art historian is the fact that the figures are not usually accompanied by identifying inscriptions. It appears that this ambiguity was acceptable or even desired, as it allowed viewers the freedom to provide their own interpretation and relate such visual stimuli to various situations. As opposed to religious figural art, which sought to provide the faithful with guidance and answers, secular imagery could apparently tease and engage its viewers with “puzzles in iconography” as a source of entertainment or as an incentive to display one's wit, sensitivity, and erudition (Walker 2011; Chatterjee 2013a). Providing diversion was but one of the functions that such works of art could serve. Through the combined study of materials, techniques, typology, style, and iconography, as well as processes of manufacture and



circulation, modern scholars are painstakingly revealing the multiple roles that these works came to fulfill in Byzantine society, from serving as the vehicles for the expression of ideological messages, means of self-representation, and indulging in one's scientific, literary, or other tastes, to aligning oneself with a current vogue or seeking protection from the powers of evil (see Pitarakis and Tuerk-Stonberg chapters, this volume). Another challenging and perennial question is whether these medieval witnesses should be understood as evidence of the continued popularity of specific themes since Antique times or not. Is, for example, the apparent concentration of works of art adorned with images associated with the courtly pleasures of the feast and the hunt in the eleventh and twelfth centuries simply an accident of survival, or is it indicative of changes in the intellectual pursuits and social mores of Byzantine society at the time? And if the latter, was it the result of an internal development or could it have also been informed by the engagement with non-Byzantine artistic traditions? Whether we are faced with survival, revival, or something else, only by the careful contextualization of our extant material witnesses both diachronically and synchronically can we hope to understand this art.

## CONCLUSION

---

Sweeping definitions and rigid taxonomies are neither possible nor necessarily useful when it comes to the study of the so-called secular arts of Byzantium. Nonetheless, works of art that may be identified by their content, function, and/or domain of use as secular provide invaluable insights into the profane component of Byzantine culture and its dynamic dialogue with the sacred at the formal, practical, and conceptual levels, even when this engagement led to the rejection or derision of sacred forms. The encounter of the two spheres not only in conventional secular domains like the city and the home but also at the church, and the continued exploration of the secular not as an aberrant but as an integral component of Byzantine culture, will continue to challenge researchers for years to come.

## REFERENCES

---

*ArtByzEmp.*

- Bakirtzis, N. 2010. "The Practice, Perception and Experience of Byzantine Fortification." In *The Byzantine World*, edited by P. Stephenson, 352–71 (London and New York).
- Boeck, E. 2009. "Simulating the Hippodrome: The Performance of Power in Kiev's St. Sophia." *AB* 91, 3: 283–301.
- Boeck, E. 2015. *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge).
- Boeck, E. 2017. "The Power of Amusement and the Amusement of Power: The Princely Frescoes of St. Sophia, Kiev, and Their Connections to the Byzantine World." In *Greek Laughter and Tears: Antiquity and After*, edited by M. Alexiou and D. Cairns, 243–62 (Edinburgh).

- Brubaker, L. 2013. "Processions and Public Spaces in Early and Middle Byzantine Constantinople." In *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture*. Papers for the Second Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, edited by A. Ödekan, N. Necipoğlu, and E. Akyürek, 123–27 (Istanbul).
- Chatterjee, P. 2013a. "Viewing and Description in 'Hysmine and Hysminias': The Fresco of the Virtues." *DOP* 67: 209–25.
- Chatterjee, P. 2013b. "Vision, Transformation, and the Veroli Casket." *Oxford Art Journal* 36, 3: 325–44.
- Chatterjee, P. 2014/2015. "The Gifts of the Gorgon: A Close Look at a Byzantine Inkpot." *RES: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics* 65/66: 210–21.
- Ćurčić, S., and E. Hadjistryphonos, eds. 1997. *Secular Medieval Architecture in the Balkans 1300–1500 and Its Preservation* (Thessaloniki).
- Cutler, A. 1984/1985. "On Byzantine Boxes." *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 42/43: 32–47.
- Cutler, A. 1995. "Sacred and Profane: The Locus of the Political in Middle Byzantine Art." In *Arte profana e arte sacra a Bisanzio*, edited by A. Iacobini and E. Zanini, 315–38 (Rome); repr. in Cutler, A. 2000, *Byzantium, Italy and the North: Papers on Cultural Relations*, 98–126 (London).
- Dauterman Maguire, E., and H. Maguire. 2007. *Other Icons. Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and J. A. Lauffenburger, eds. 2001. *A Lost Art Rediscovered: The Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium* (Baltimore).
- Grabar, A. 1971. "L'art profane à Byzance." In *XIVe Congrès international de Études byzantines: Rapports*, 3: 7–32 (Bucharest).
- Hachlili, R. 2009. *Ancient Mosaic Pavements: Themes, Issues, and Trends* (Leiden and Boston).
- Hanson, J. 2010. "The Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Renaissance." In *A Companion to Byzantium*, edited by L. James, 338–50 (Chichester).
- James, L. 1996. "'Pray Not to Fall into Temptation and Be on Your Guard': Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople." *Gesta* 35: 12–20.
- Kalas, V. 2009. "Challenging the Sacred Landscape of Byzantine Cappadocia." In *Negotiating Secular and Sacred in Medieval Art, Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist*, edited by A. Walker and A. Luyster, 147–73 (Farnham and Burlington, VT).
- Kepetzi, V. 2014. "Scenes of Performers in Byzantine Art, Iconography, Social and Cultural Milieu: The Case of Acrobats." In *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by A. Öztürkmen and E. Birge Vitz, 345–84 (Turnhout).
- Kirin, A. 2005. "Sacred Art, Secular Context." In *Sacred Art, Secular Context. Objects of Art from the Byzantine Collection of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC*, edited by A. Kirin, J. Carder, and R. Nelson, 13–21 (Athens, GA).
- Leader-Newby, R. E. 2004. *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT).
- Lemerle, P. 1977. *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris).
- Littlewood, A. R., ed. 1995. *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music* (Oxford).
- Magdalino, P. 2012. "The Beauty of Antiquity in Late Byzantine Praises of Constantinople." In *Villes de toute beauté: l'ekphrasis des cités dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves*, edited by P. Odorico and Ch. Messis, 101–21 (Paris).
- Maguire, H. 1999. "The Profane Aesthetic in Byzantine Art and Literature." *DOP* 53: 189–205.
- Maguire, H. 2010. "Unofficial Art and the Resistance to Orthodoxy." In *The Byzantine World*, edited by P. Stephenson, 320–33 (London and New York).

- Maguire, H. 2012. *Nectar and Illusion: Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature* (New York).
- Mango, C. 2000. "The Triumphal Way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate." *DOP* 54: 173–88.
- Netzer, N. 2006. "Secular and Sacred Objects from the Middle Ages: Illuminating the History of Classification." In *Secular Sacred, 11th–16th Century: Works from the Boston Public Library and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, edited by N. Netzer, 11–18 (Chestnut Hill, MA).
- Newman, B. 2013. *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred* (Notre Dame, IN).
- Ousterhout, R. G. 2015. "Water and Healing in Constantinople: Reading the Architectural Remains." In *Life Is Short, Art Long: The Art of Healing in Byzantium*, edited by B. Pitarakis, 64–77 (Istanbul).
- Sigalos, L. 2004. *Housing in Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece*. BAR International Series 1291 (Oxford).
- Sklavou Mauroeide, M. 1999. *Γλυπτά του Βυζαντινού Μουσείου Αθηνών* (Athens).
- Spieser, J.-M. 2004. "L'art imperial et chrétien, unité et diversités." In *Le monde byzantin. Tome 1. L'Empire romain d'Orient, 330–641*, edited by C. Morrisson, 277–300 (Paris).
- Spieser, J.-M. 2006. "L'art." In *Le monde byzantin. Tome 2. L'Empire byzantin, 641–1204*, edited by J.-C. Cheynet, 369–93 (Paris).
- Strube, Ch. 1973. *Die westliche Eingangsseite der Kirchen von Konstantinopel in justinianischer Zeit. Architektonische und quellenkritische Untersuchungen* (Wiesbaden).
- Thierry, N. 1985. "Un portrait de Jean Tzimiskès en Cappadoce." *Travaux et mémoires* 9: 477–44.
- Walker, A. 2011. "Off the Page and beyond Antiquity: Ancient Romance in Medieval Byzantine Silver." In *Fictional Traces: Receptions of the Ancient Novel*, edited by M. P. Futre Pinheiro and S. J. Harrisson, 1: 55–68 (Groningen).
- Walker, A. 2012. *The Emperor and the World. Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E.* (New York).
- Walker, A., and A. Luyster. 2009. "Introduction. Mapping the Heavens and Treading the Earth: Negotiating Secular and Sacred in Medieval Art." In *Negotiating Secular and Sacred in Medieval Art, Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist*, edited by A. Walker and A. Luyster, 1–16 (Farnham and Burlington, VT).
- Woodfin, W. T. 2016. "Within a Budding Grove: Dancers, Gardens, and the Enamel Cup from the Chungul Kurgan." *AB* 98, 2: 151–80.

## CHAPTER 9

---

# THE IMPERIAL ARTS

---

BENJAMIN ANDERSON

Two authors have attempted systematic and comprehensive accounts of the Byzantine imperial image. For André Grabar (Grabar 1936, 1), “Byzantine imperial art has but a single end: to glorify the supreme power of the *basileus*.” Similarly, for Klaus Wessel (Wessel 1978, 742–43), “the final word on the function of the imperial image in Byzantium is a passage from Basil the Great . . . : “The honor shown to the image passes over to the prototype.” It may seem obvious that imperial art should primarily concern the emperor. However, since the late 1980s, studies of visual politics have emphasized instead the diversity of actors and purposes that form the image of a sovereign (e.g., Zanker 1988. Burke 1992). This development has not gone unnoticed by Byzantinists, as witness, for example, analyses of the imperial portraits in Hagia Sophia by Robin Cormack (1994) and Leslie Brubaker (2010). Still missing, however, is a synthesis with the breadth of Grabar’s or Wessel’s that addresses the imperial image without assuming the emperor’s centrality. This chapter can hardly meet the need, but aims to provide an overview of the multiple functions that representations of the Byzantine emperor served. Two themes recur throughout: the transactional nature of imperial portraiture, and the distinction between depicting a person and depicting an office.

The transactional aspect forms part of Byzantium’s Roman inheritance. Its underlying principle was expressed by a Jewish teacher in first-century Palestine who, pressed on the justification for taxes, drew his interlocutors’ attention to the emperor’s image on a coin, advising that they “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Matthew 22:21). The injunction was as proverbial in Byzantium as it is today; in the thirteenth century, Emperor Michael VIII closed the circle by citing it in the foundation document for a monastery (Thomas and Hero 2000, 1249). As an account of imperial portraiture, “render unto Caesar” has nothing to do with the glorification of a person: the purpose of the image is rather to validate a transaction between state and subject.

Most Byzantine subjects would have encountered the imperial image primarily on such coins, and thus through such transactions. State employees were paid and taxes collected in gold coin, legally a closed system (Hendy 1985, 257) symbolically anchored by the ruler’s visage. In practice, subjects turned those portraits to their own ends. For

example, Late Antique elites were fond of numismatic jewelry (Jones 2011). A coin displayed as personal ornament was removed from circulation in order to communicate both social status (more precisely, proximity to the emperor, from whose hands high-ranking officials received their salaries) and surplus wealth.

Numismatic jewelry also exemplifies the hazy distinction between individual and office. Does the wearer pledge loyalty to the state or to its reigning sovereign? The “Kyrenia Girdle” presents a gallery of emperors from Theodosius II to Maurikios, a two-century span (Figure 9.1) (Grierson 1957), and thus says more about the antiquity of the wearer’s family than his or her relationship to any individual ruler. The same question applies to coin in regular circulation, in which images of the reigning emperor inevitably circulated alongside older issues. In the words of one of Walter Scott’s innkeepers, “as lang as siller’s current . . . folk manna look ower nicely at what king’s head’s on’t” (1999 [1815], 178).

Western medievalists customarily address the distinction between person and office via the English legal fiction of the “King’s Two Bodies.” Ernst Kantorowicz found the cleavage distilled in Shakespeare’s portrait of Richard II renouncing crown and scepter: “bit by bit he deprives his body politic of the symbols of its dignity and exposes his poor body natural to the eyes of the spectators” (Kantorowicz 1957, 36). The Byzantines too used things to render a body imperial. Scepter and globus were rooted in Roman tradition (Alföldi 1970, 228–38; for preserved *realia* see Panella 2011), while the imperial crown emerged from fourth-century innovation (Deér 1977, 11–41). Crowns could also be worn by family members and high-ranking officials, even presented to foreign rulers; it is unlikely that either of the preserved “Byzantine crowns” sat on an emperor’s head (Hilsdale 2008; Dawson 2009). Instead, multiple insignia (Parani 2003, 11–34; Ball 2005, 11–35) and ceremonies (Macrides, Munitiz, and Angelov 2013, 210–43, 414–27) were required to turn a person into an imperial image. Such living portraits were as susceptible to transactional engagement as the artificial—as when a rioting



**FIGURE 9.1.** Girdle composed of gold coins and medallions assembled ca. 583, discovered near Kyrenia, Cyprus. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. no. 17.190.147; 1991.136. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

crowd mounted an imperial look-alike on a donkey, crowned him in a wreath of garlic, and acclaimed him with ribald verses (Mango and Scott 1997, 408).

The imperial portrait, like rhetoric and public space, was a medium through which subjects articulated both their personal relationship to the reigning emperor and their juridical relationship to the state. The parameters that constrained such expressions—the predominant materials, visual strategies, and social actors—changed substantially over the course of the long Byzantine millennium. The following discussion follows a conventional tripartite division into “Early,” “Middle,” and “Late” periods. This structure accommodates some key changes (for example, the disappearance of sculpture in the round at the end of the early period and its return at the start of the late) while eliding others (such as the new significance of portraits on the façades of elite houses in the middle of the middle or the disappearance of gold coinage in the middle of the late). For present purposes, it serves as a convenient means to arrange phenomena that await more thorough analysis.

## EARLY BYZANTINE PERIOD: THE OLD SYSTEM COLLAPSES

---

The imperial turn to Christianity had little immediate effect on Roman modes of portraiture, but coincided with a change in the social function of imperial monuments. Viewed in the light of subsequent developments, the Arch of Constantine is a late example of a traditional monument. It was dedicated, following custom, by the Senate and People of Rome. Its inscription spoke in the same voice as earlier arches, and its reliefs expressed the values of the Senate. In their scenic tableaux, Constantine performed the traditional duties of his office, leading the army in battle and addressing Senate and People from the rostra in the Roman Forum (Zanker 2012; Liverani 2014, 11–12).

By contrast, monuments in the new imperial residences, including Constantinople, were dedicated by officials dependent on imperial favor, usually the urban or praetorian prefects (Mayer 2002, 1–27). Their inscriptions were increasingly idiosyncratic—the Obelisk Base of Theodosius speaks in the first person in the Greek and the third person in the Latin (Safran 1993)—and their images violated earlier decorum, as by depicting civil war (Mayer, 2002, 159–61). If the old monuments reproduced traditional interpretations of the imperial office, new monuments increasingly flattered individual emperors. Dedication of monuments by the prefectures constituted a more regular system than before, but made no pretense to express a broad social consensus. All mention of “Senate and People” disappeared.

Although this new system prescribed normative modes of transaction between subject and emperor, in practice monuments became loci for the expression of discontent. In 403, when the urban prefect dedicated a statue of the empress Eudoxia outside Hagia Sophia, acclamations were voiced and mimes and dancers performed, “as was then the usual practice when statues of the emperors were erected.” However, the spectacle

called forth a furious rebuke from the bishop, John Chrysostom, and the ensuing controversy resulted in his expulsion and the destruction of cathedral and senate by fire (Kelly 1995, 238–51).

The significance of John's objection becomes clear when compared to a second controversy about Eudoxia. In 400, Honorius complained to his co-emperor, Eudoxia's husband Arcadius, that the Augusta had disseminated her images to the provinces, expecting that they be received like those of an Augustus (Holum 1982, 66–67). His objection presumes that the system is legitimate, its use by a woman inappropriate. John's critique, by contrast, was more fundamental. As bishop of Antioch in 387, he defended the citizens from state violence after rioters overturned imperial statues, explicitly stating that desecration of the imperial image did not merit capital punishment (Paverd 1991). In other homilies, he attacked the principles of civic benefaction that underpinned the granting of honorific statues in Roman cities (Roskam 2014).

When rioters overturned imperial statues, or when wags posted satiric epigrams on their bases, such acts could be attributed to dissatisfaction with unpopular emperors, not a wholesale critique of the imperial office. Still, the cumulative tendency opposed the maintenance of the system of monumental honors. A historian of the later sixth century could depict an emperor swearing that his statue should stand neither on a specific pillar "nor anywhere else" (Anderson 2016, 297–308). Heraclius is the first emperor for whom no public portrait monuments are attested, although he did dedicate an equestrian statue to his brother (Bauer 2003, 511–12).

Not all Early Byzantine imperial portraits were statues. Monuments dedicated to Leo, Justinian, and Maurikios depicted their achievements in mosaic, a medium that accommodated more complex, multi-figure compositions (Bauer 1996, 322–23). An increasing preference for two-dimensional panel portraits contributed to the obsolescence of sculpture across social registers (Liverani 2016). However, the seventh-century disappearance of public imperial portrait monuments affected painting and mosaic as well (Anderson 2016, 291–97); even the customary procedure of sending official (presumably panel) portraits from Constantinople to Rome is unattested between 610 and 711 (Kruse 1934, 32–34). Imperial portraiture did not simply change media in the seventh century. Rather, the Late Antique system of dedication and distribution of public imperial portrait monuments by the prefectures ceased.

Both the maintenance and the abandonment of the system were conditioned by the material and spatial qualities of its defining medium, the colossal bronze statue. Only one is preserved: the Colossus of Barletta, described by Grabar as an "oeuvre brutale" (Figure 9.2) (Grabar 1936, 17). Such over-life-sized, forward-facing statues were designed to elicit an "adoring" reception from their viewers, especially when elevated on columns (Bauer 1996, 333–38), as was the Barletta statue when originally displayed in Constantinople (Peschlow 1986). Whereas for Henri Lefebvre (1991, 143) modern European monuments serve to "mask . . . the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will," these early statues were unabashed displays of autocratic power. Unwieldy as they were, all save one were eventually toppled for scrap. In the intervening centuries, some were reinterpreted as representations of



FIGURE 9.2. The “Colossus of Barletta.” Bronze statue of a Roman emperor, probably Leo I (r. 457–474). Photo: B. Anderson.

a supra-individual office (Bauer 1996, 339–49), while others—including the Barletta statue—were domesticated by means of folklore (Weinryb 2016, 1–4).

## MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD: NEW PRACTICES EMERGE

---

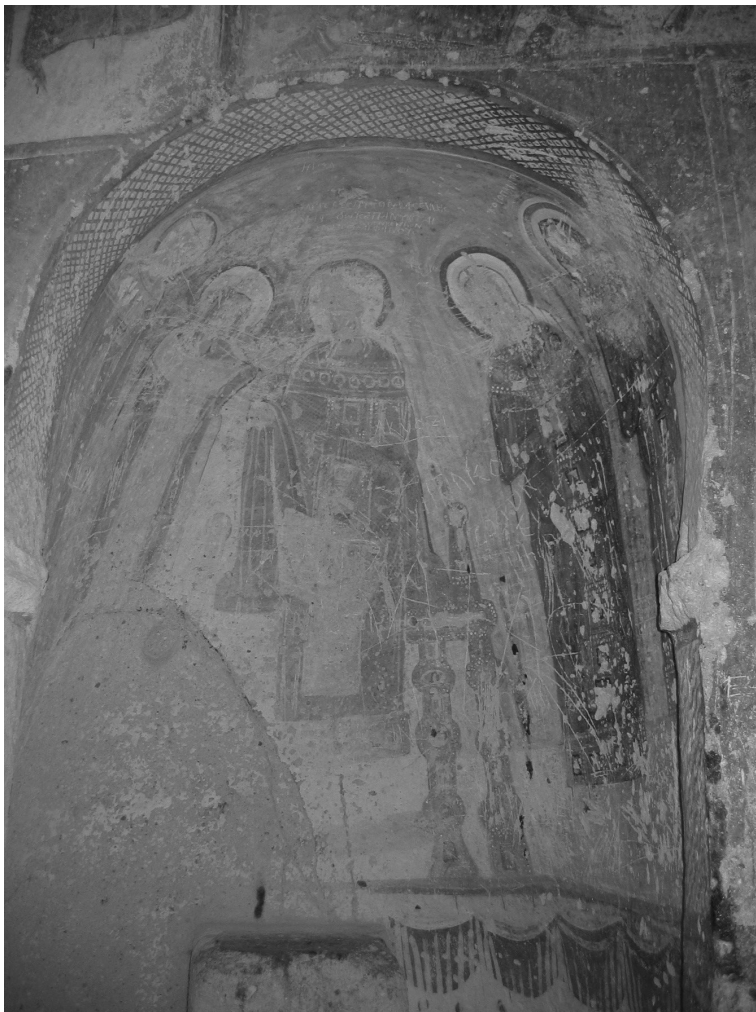
When imperial images returned to the public sphere in the eighth century, they did not cohere into a new official system but remained as ad-hoc dedications, most of which were executed in painting or mosaic and displayed in churches or homes. Whereas the socially restricted nature of the old system provoked extralegal interventions, the new practices permitted greater flexibility, even if they were governed by an implicit code of etiquette. To display the portrait of a foreign sovereign, as did the protostrator Alexios in the reign of Manuel I, was to risk exile (Brand 1976, 199–202). Idiosyncratic monuments could also backfire on their imperial honorees, as when a historian interpreted a portrait of Andronikos I holding a sickle as a public confession to murder (Eastmond 2013). But these are exceptional cases. As a rule, Middle Byzantine practice facilitated expression



of a greater range of relationships between subject and emperor than those officially recognized by the Late Antique system.

With greater flexibility came greater ambiguity, and the intent of individual monuments can be difficult to divine. A small rock-cut church in the Cappadocian village of Çavuşin displays an example of this ambiguity. In a frescoed niche north of the apse, the emperor Nikephoros Phokas stands at center, flanked to his right by the empress Theophano and an unidentified figure, and to his left by his father and brother (Figure 9.3).

Additional worthies populate the frescoes of the church's north half, including two patrons whose identifying inscriptions are now illegible. Nikephoros, member of a



**FIGURE 9.3.** Portraits of Nikephoros Phokas (r. 963–969) and his family, from a niche north of the apse of a rock-cut church in Çavuşin, Turkey. Fresco. Photo: B. Anderson.

prominent Cappadocian family, rose to imperial office through military support, and the Çavuşin ensemble may constitute an effort by “Cappadocian landowners . . . to commemorate the accession and lend a little local weight to the newly formed imperial family” (Rodley 1983, 324). However, at a later date an equestrian figure on the east end of the north wall was relabeled with an acclamation of the emperor John Tzimiskes, Nikephoros’ assassin and successor (Thierry 1985, 478). If the ensemble was once meant to celebrate the rise of an individual, it was later updated to affirm continuing allegiance to the emperor, even while preserving the portrait of his fallen predecessor.

There is evidence for a posthumous decree, in the manner of the Roman *damnatio memoriae*, ordering destruction of Nikephoros’ portraits (Opstall 2008, 281–88), although the paintings of Çavuşin demonstrate that it was not universally observed. The posthumous defacement of the portraits of Andronikos I, by contrast, is depicted by a historian as a spontaneous act of an enraged crowd (Magoulias 1984, 194). Given the frequency of regime change in Byzantium, subjects must have developed strategies to update visual pledges of fealty, but these, like the pledges themselves, seem to have been more ad hoc than officially regulated.

A telling interpretive challenge is presented by the silk hanging, over four meters square and preserved in Bamberg since the eleventh century, that depicts an emperor on horseback flanked by personifications. One scholar understands the absence of an identifying inscription as intentional: “Byzantine art creates general or universal meanings that were contextualized at particular ceremonies” (Nelson 2011–2012, 174). The silk remains in use even if a given emperor is deposed. By contrast, another scholar identifies the emperor as Nikephoros Phokas, the personifications as Cilicia and Cyprus, the silk as a customary gift to a triumphator, and its export to Germany as a means to dispose of a monument to an overthrown sovereign (Papamastorakis 2003). The two accounts are irreconcilable, but we know too little to judge which is the more plausible.

The full potential of two-dimensional portraits to depict varied relations between emperor and subject is revealed by the epigrams, preserved in a thirteenth-century manuscript, that describe portraits of Manuel I on the façades and vestibules of elite houses in Constantinople and Thessaloniki (Magdalino and Nelson 1982, 135–37; Grünbart 2015, 98–102). The emperor could be shown with his imperial ancestors, with the Virgin and saints, or with heroes of the Hebrew Bible. If the master of the house was customarily depicted in proskynesis, this humble pose could be tempered by an epigraphic account of his own eminent lineage. Such images expressed loyalty, but their multi-figure compositions allowed both for individual variation and for representation of claims to social status independent of one’s relationship to the emperor. They could also, like the paintings in Çavuşin or indeed the imperial portraits in Hagia Sophia, be altered and updated as necessary (Kiilerich 2004, 184–93).

Middle Byzantine imperial portraits were different in kind both from the relief tableaux of the Arch of Constantine and from the colossal bronze statues of later antiquity. Like the reliefs, they exploited the ability of two-dimensional media to define the imperial person through spatial juxtaposition with other actors. However, instead of depicting concrete events, such as the outcome of a battle or the delivery of a speech,

they expressed states of affairs: the theoretical or normative relationship of an emperor to people or to personified principles. The cumulative effect was to construct an imperial image that not only transcended individual personalities or dynasties, but could even be deployed outside the empire (e.g., the portrait of the Norman king Roger II in the Martorana, Palermo, Figure 15.1), and ultimately survived the collapse of the Byzantine state (e.g., Kantorowicz 1963).

## LATE BYZANTINE PERIOD: FROM COSMOPOLITAN TABLEAUX TO THE CLOSED SERIES

---

The Latin capture of Constantinople in 1204 constituted more an internationalization than an interruption of the imperial arts, as the new sovereigns adopted many of the trappings of power of their Byzantine predecessors (Shawcross 2012). In the Greek successor states, meanwhile, new modes of representation were developed to sustain the fiction of Byzantine exceptionalism. A notable example is the silk preserved in the Museo di Sant'Agostino, Genoa, produced to solemnize the Nicaean-Genoese alliance that immediately preceded the recapture of Constantinople in 1261. In addition to a narrative cycle of the life of St. Lawrence, the silk depicts Michael VIII in the company of the saint and the Archangel. Although intended to praise an emperor in exile, it addressed a foreign audience. Thus the etiquette that it observed was no longer domestic, but diplomatic (Hilsdale 2014, 31–87). Even the column monument commemorating Michael's recapture of Constantinople, atop which a bronze emperor presented a model of the city to the Archangel, was ambivalent: both a revival of a long-dormant medium (Hilsdale 2014, 102–22), and an echo of the contemporary resurgence of bronze statuary in Italy (Talbot 1993, 256–60).

With increased circulation of the imperial image abroad came an increase in representations of the Byzantine emperor by foreigners. Display of the emperor's face outside the empire's territory was not in itself a novelty. Roman medallions were repurposed by Scandinavian elites in the fourth century (Wicker 2016), and a nimbed emperor presides over the ceremonies of the Constantinopolitan Hippodrome in the eleventh-century frescoes of the princely church in Kyiv (Boeck 2009). But in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an ever-wider range of agents produced increasingly diverse images of Byzantine emperors: presiding over the church councils in the narthexes of Serbian churches (Walter 1970), and committing deeds both heroic and ignominious in the miniatures of a manuscript produced for the emperor of Bulgaria (Boeck 2015).

With such an expanding cast of actors, misunderstandings were inevitable. On February 9, 1438, a ship bearing John VIII from the Lido toward Piazza San Marco was met by a Venetian fleet, of which one vessel served as the stage for a tableau vivant. The scene is described by a member of the Byzantine delegation:

Around the entire ship the imperial insignia had been hung. On the stern there were a great number of golden standards, and four men clothed in gold-painted robes, with golden-white hairs on their heads. In the middle of the four was a beautiful man, who sometimes sat and sometimes stood, wearing gold-woven and radiant robes, and holding in his hand a scepter, as if he were lord of the ship. The other archontes looked like foreign satraps, clothed in most variegated garments of another kind. And I suppose they were waiting upon him with reverence. (Gill 1953, 2–3)

The Venetians presumably meant to hold a mirror to the Byzantine court, but the Greek viewer saw only an exotic assembly of Persian “satraps.”

John VIII’s journey, which was occasioned by the Council of Ferrara-Florence, gave rise to a remarkable series of images by Italian artists. Pisanello’s medallion depicts the emperor in profile on the obverse, and on horseback in a rocky landscape on the enigmatic reverse (Weiss 1966). The bronze doors that Filarete executed for St. Peter’s in Rome show John aboard the ship bound for Venice, paying court to Pope Eugenius IV, and departing from Florence (Glass 2012). Other representations were more oblique. During the fateful 1450s, John appeared as a magus in Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes for the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence, as the emperors Constantine and Heraclius in Piero di Francesco’s Arezzo cycle of the Legend of the True Cross, and as Pontius Pilate in that same painter’s *Flagellation of Christ* (Fugelso 2002).

Disparate as they appear at first, the council paintings, historical miniatures, bronze doors, and Tuscan frescoes share a distinct visual strategy. They are scenic tableaux in which the emperor is one among a number of figures, much closer in kind to the frieze reliefs of the Arch of Constantine than to either the individual colossi of Late Antiquity or the pared-down schemata of medieval Byzantium. If on the arch senatorial self-sufficiency had served to cut the emperor down to size, in later centuries the Byzantine state’s increasing dependency on foreign alliances had a similar effect.

With the Ottoman conquest, however, a different format rose to the fore: the closed series. This too had earlier precedents, such as the cycles of cryptic images, eventually attributed to Leo the Wise, that claimed to foretell future emperors (Dagron 2007, 142–47). The series first appears in its more familiar form in a fifteenth-century copy of the history of John Zonaras, now in Modena, which contains drawings of all the emperors, from Augustus to Constantine XI (Spatharakis 1976, 172–83; Gratziou 1996–1997).

Thus arrayed, the Byzantine emperors enter the annals of Byzantine studies. Already in Du Cange’s *Historia Byzantina* (1680), they appear as a closed series of medallions. Many are based on numismatic portraits and find a recent analogue in Dumbarton Oaks’ online exhibit of “The Byzantine Emperors on Coins.” However, Du Cange’s series and its descendants pose a wholly new set of questions from the coins of the Kyrenia Girdle (Figure 9.1). Since the 1740s, scholars in the monastic library of Einsiedeln have been confronted by stucco portraits of past occupants of the imperial office: Eirene, for example (Figure 9.4). Not one has pledged loyalty to her person. Until Austerlitz, some may have imagined themselves subjects of a state that preserved her office. But the great majority will have understood her primarily as a subject of historical knowledge.



**FIGURE 9.4.** Eirene, from one of the stucco trees that sprout portraits of the Roman emperors. Library of the Benedictine Abbey in Einsiedeln. Stucco by Josef Anton Feuchtmayer, ca. 1740. Photo: B. Anderson.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

---

This essay's introduction invoked the English conceit of the "King's Two Bodies" as a means to distinguish between person and office. It surely does not apply in all particulars to Byzantium, but we await a thorough evaluation of the points of similarity and divergence (note, however, James 2001 and Eastmond 2003). While such an investigation would necessarily consider normative statements of the inviolability of the imperial

image, it would also assess the production, display, and alteration of actual imperial images, especially as the latter are considerably more complex and ambiguous than the former. A rigorous analysis of the evidence would both facilitate comparison between Byzantine and Western medieval rulership, and help to test the hypothesis that “Byzantium was a republican and not a ‘constitutional’ monarchy” in which “revolution was the permanent but irregular mechanism by which the republic acted against individual emperors” (Kaldellis 2015, 181).

Attention to the transactional functions of the imperial image will contribute to a fuller understanding, not only of the imperial office, but also of Byzantine subjects. The vast majority of individuals who produced, displayed, and reacted to imperial portraits were not themselves emperors. Studies of more recent, and thus more richly documented, systems for the production of ruler portraits illustrate the diversity of frames through which people have understood these activities, from the cosmological (“nothing exists in this entire world but this dear and beloved face”) through the political (“I want the public . . . to understand why you are one of our leaders”) to the editorial (“the figure . . . is too short, the head too large, the figure too small in relation to those behind it”) (Plamper 2012, 114, 140, 189). The corresponding terrain of relationships, both affective and intellectual, that bound Byzantine subjects to their rulers’ images remains to be mapped.

Both lines of inquiry adumbrated above seek in imperial portraits an understanding more of empire than of art. A third, intimately related, set of questions concerns the status of the emperor’s portrait as a distinct “type,” susceptible to comparison with icons and idols. The “difficulty of representing the dual natures of the emperor,” person and office, rendered the imperial portrait unusually ambivalent (Eastmond 2003, 78). But the twin poles of the body politic and the body natural do not exhaust the peculiar operations of the emperor’s image. Take the case of a book containing “the forms and figures . . . of future emperors” said to have been discovered in the imperial library during the reign of Leo V; one picture, in which a hunter ran through a lion with a lance, foretold Leo’s own assassination, as a *quaestor* divined (Featherstone and Signes-Codoñer 2015, 57). This anonymous bureaucrat thus anticipated not only the individual deed, but also the transformation of the emperor’s portrait into a subject of knowledge. The understanding of image, not text, as the primary medium of such knowledge is without precedent in Greco-Roman antiquity; its emergence in Byzantium awaits explanation.

## REFERENCES

- Alföldi, A. 1970. *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Darmstadt).
- Anderson, B. 2016. “The Disappearing Imperial Statue: Toward a Social Approach.” In *The Afterlife of Greek and Roman Sculpture: Late Antique Responses and Practices*, edited by T. M. Kristensen and L. Stirling, 290–309 (Ann Arbor).
- Ball, J. L. 2005. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting* (New York).

- Bauer, F. A. 1996. *Stadt, Platz, und Denkmal in der Spätantike: Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Konstantinopel, und Ephesos* (Mainz).
- Bauer, F. A. 2003. "Statuen hoher Würdenträger im Stadtbild Konstantinopels." *BZ* 96: 493–513.
- Boeck, E. 2009. "Simulating the Hippodrome: The Performance of Power in Kiev's St. Sophia." *AB* 91: 283–301.
- Boeck, E. N. 2015. *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge).
- Brand, C., trans. 1976. *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus by John Kinnamos* (New York).
- Brubaker, L. 2010. "Gifts and Prayers: The Visualization of Gift Giving in Byzantium and the Mosaics at Hagia Sophia." In *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, edited by W. Davies and P. Fouracre, 33–61 (Cambridge).
- Burke, P. 1992. *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven).
- Cormack, R. 1994. "The Emperor at St. Sophia: Viewer and Viewed." In *Byzance et les images*, edited by A. Guillou and J. Durand, 223–53 (Paris).
- Dagron, G. 2007. *Décrire et peindre: Essai sur le portrait iconique* (Paris).
- Dawson, T. 2009. "The Monomachos Crown: Towards a Resolution." *Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα* 19: 183–93.
- Deér, J. 1977. *Byzanz und das abendländische Herrschertum* (Sigmaringen).
- Du Cange, C. 1680. *Historia Byzantina duplici commentario illustrata* (Paris).
- Eastmond, A. 2003. "Between Icon and Idol: The Uncertainty of Imperial Images." In *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium*, edited by A. Eastmond and L. James, 73–85 (Aldershot).
- Eastmond, A. 2013. "'It Began with a Picture': Imperial Art, Texts and Subversion between East and West in the Twelfth Century." In *Power and Subversion in Byzantium*, edited by D. Angelov and M. Saxby, 121–43 (Aldershot).
- Featherstone, J., and J. Signes Codoñer. 2015. *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur, Libri I–IV* (Berlin).
- Fugelso, K. 2002. "Approaching Appropriation: John VIII Palaeologus in Pre-Modern Art and Modern Art History." *Ennaratio* 9: 81–115.
- Gill, J., editor. 1953. *Quae supersunt actorum Graecorum Concilii Florentini* (Rome).
- Glass, R. 2012. "Filarete's Hilaritas: Claiming Authorship and Status on the Doors of St. Peter's." *AB* 94: 548–71.
- Grabar, A. 1936. *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin: Recherches sur l'art officiel de l'empire d'Orient* (Paris).
- Gratziou, O. 1996–97. "Μαρτυρίες για τους χρήστες του Ζωναρά της Μόδενας," *DChAE* 19: 39–62.
- Grierson, P. 1955. "The Kyrenia Girdle of Byzantine Medallions and Solidi." *Numismatic Chronicle* 15: 55–70.
- Grünbart, M. 2015. *Inszenierung und Repräsentation der byzantinischen Aristokratie vom 10. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn).
- Hendy, M. 1985. *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300–1450* (Cambridge).
- Hilsdale, C. 2008. "The Social Life of the Byzantine Gift: The Royal Crown of Hungary Re-invented." *AH* 31: 603–31.
- Hilsdale, C. 2014. *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge).
- Holum, K. G. 1982. *Theodosian Emperresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley).

- James, L. 2001. *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (Leicester).
- Jones, A. 2011. "Lord Protect the Wearer': Late Antique Numismatic Jewelry and the Image of the Emperor as Talismanic Device." PhD diss., Yale University.
- Kaldellis, A. 2015. *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA).
- Kantorowicz, E. 1957. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton).
- Kantorowicz, E. 1963. "Oriens Augusti—Lever du Roi." *DOP* 17: 117–77.
- Kelly, J. N. D. 1995. *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY).
- Kiilerich, B. 2004. "Likeness and Icon: The Imperial Couples in Hagia Sophia." *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 18: 175–203.
- Kruse, H. 1934. *Studien zur offiziellen Geltung des Kaiserbildes im römischen Reiche* (Paderborn).
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford).
- Liverani, P. 2014. "Chi parla a chi?: Epigrafia monumentale e immagine pubblica in epoca tardoantica." In *Using Images in Late Antiquity*, edited by S. Birk, T. M. Kristensen, and B. Poulsen, 3–32 (Oxford).
- Liverani, P. 2016. "The Sunset of 3D." In *The Afterlife of Greek and Roman Sculpture: Late Antique Responses and Practices*, edited by T. M. Kristensen and L. Stirling, 310–29 (Ann Arbor).
- Macrides, R., J. A. Munitiz, and D. Angelov. 2013. *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies* (Farnham).
- Magdalino, P., and R. Nelson. 1982. "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century." *ByzForsch* 8: 123–83.
- Magoulias, H. J., trans. 1984. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit).
- Mango, C., and R. Scott, trans. 1997. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford).
- Mayer, E. 2002. *Rom ist dort, wo der Kaiser ist: Untersuchungen zu den Staatsdenkmälern des dezentralisierten Reiches von Diocletian bis zu Theodosius II* (Mainz).
- Nelson, R. S. 2011–2012. "And So, with the Help of God': The Byzantine Art of War in the Tenth Century." *DOP* 65/66: 169–92.
- Opstall, E. M., ed. and trans. 2008. *Jean Géomètre: Poèmes en hexamètres et en distiques élégiaques* (Leiden).
- Panella, C., ed. 2011. *I segni del potere: Realtà e immaginario della sovranità nella Roma imperiale* (Bari).
- Papamastorakis, T. 2003. "The Bamberg Hanging Reconsidered." *DChAE* 24: 375–92.
- Parani, M. 2003. *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden).
- Paverd, F. 1991. *St. John Chrysostom, the Homilies on the Statues: An Introduction* (Rome).
- Peschlow, U. 1986. "Eine wiedergewonnene byzantinische Ehrensäule in Istanbul." In *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidmet*, edited by O. Feld and U. Peschlow, 1.21–33 (Bonn).
- Plamper, J. 2012. *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven).
- Rodley, L. 1983. "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin." *JÖB* 33: 301–39.
- Roskam, G. 2014. "John Chrysostom on Pagan Euergetism: A Reading of the First Part of *De inani gloria et de educandis liberis*." *Sacris erudiri* 53: 147–70.
- Safran, L. 1993. "Points of View: The Theodosian Obelisk Base in Context." *GRBS* 34: 409–35.
- Scott, W. 1999 [1815]. *Guy Mannering*. Edited by P. D. Garside (Edinburgh).



- Shawcross, T. 2012. "Conquest Legitimized: The Making of a Byzantine Emperor in Crusader Constantinople (1204–1261)." In *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World after 1150*, edited by J. Harris, C. Holmes, and E. Russell, 181–220 (Oxford).
- Spatharakis, I. 1976. *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden).
- Talbot, A.-M. 1993. "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII." *DOP* 47: 243–61.
- Thierry, N. 1985. "Un portrait de Jean Tzimiskès en Cappadoce." *Travaux et mémoires* 9: 477–84.
- Thomas, J., and A. C. Hero, eds. 2000. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Washington, DC).
- Walter, C. 1970. *L'iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine* (Paris).
- Weinryb, I. 2016. *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge).
- Weiss, R. 1966. *Pisanello's Medallion of the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus* (London).
- Wessel, K. 1978. "Kaiserbild." In *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, edited by K. Wessel and M. Restle, III. 722–853 (Stuttgart).
- Wicker, N. L. 2016. "Roman Medallions in Scandinavia: Shifting Contexts of Space, Time, and Meaning." In *Beyond Boundaries: Connecting Visual Cultures in the Provinces of Ancient Rome*, edited by S. E. Alcock, M. Egri, and J. F. D. Frakes, 232–47 (Los Angeles).
- Zanker, P. 1988. *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Translated by Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor).
- Zanker, P. 2012. "Der Konstantinsbogen als Monument des Senates." *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 25: 77–105.

## CHAPTER 10

---

# PRIVATE COLLECTING AND THE ART MARKET FOR BYZANTINE ARTIFACTS

---

CHRISTIAN SCHMIDT  
DEDICATED TO HUGO HELBING

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF COLLECTING AND DEALING

---

FROM October 28 to 30, 1913, an auction took place in Munich under the title Ancient and Byzantine Minor Arts from Foreign and Local Collections. It was organized by Hugo Helbing, a Jewish gallery owner and auctioneer later murdered by the Nazis in 1938. According to the catalogue preface, “the items came mostly from the property of a distinguished foreigner who had the opportunity to acquire them on extensive travels in the Near East at their find spots.” And further on: “In view of the obstacles put in the way these days in all southern countries to the export of antiquities, the chance to acquire good things on neutral ground without restrictions will be especially welcome to museums and collectors” (Helbing 1913).

With these century-old remarks, we are amid a problem more pressing than ever. That “distinguished foreigner” referred to was Noury Bey, a Turkish politician and art dealer. Private collectors at the auction cannot be identified after such a long time, nor can the items they acquired. For Byzantine objects there were probably not many buyers compared to those for ancient artifacts, similar to the situation of nowadays. But the word “Byzantine” appeared with equal weight in the title of the auction, indicating an assumed interest on the part of private collectors. And of the 1,059 lots, 142 were under the heading Early Christian, Coptic, Byzantine, a proportion almost never reached in modern auctions. Though Byzantine artifacts can be counted in with ancient objects provided that they were made in Late Antiquity, a fact understood by Helbing, those

manufactured in the Early and High Middle Ages are offered today in “Antiquities” sales. Only objects dating to the Palaiologan period appear occasionally together with late medieval sculptures and other artworks. In this chapter, the complex conception “antiquity,” where it stands alone, includes therefore the term “Byzantium” and its derivations.

In the public area the interest in the Early Christian and Byzantine cultures grew in Western Europe during the nineteenth century, manifested in buildings of supposedly Byzantine style (see Bullen chapter, this volume), the use of Byzantine subjects in historiography, poetry, opera librettos, and in the world’s first foundation of an Institute of Byzantine Studies by Karl Krumbacher in 1898 at the University of Munich. Around the turn of the century, big museums like the British Museum increasingly collected Early Christian and Byzantine art, and specialist literature (Dalton 1911), handbooks (Wulff 1914), and catalogues appeared (Dalton 1901, 1912; Wulff 1909–1923). According to the preface by Wilhelm von Bode, the artifacts in the three volumes by Wulff had been systematically collected since 1895 and transferred 1904 to the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin established by Bode and later named after him. Most are still there, except for those plundered after the Second World War and taken to the Soviet Union.

In Eastern Europe, N. P. Kondakov, one of the pioneers of Byzantine art history, brought out a work on Byzantine illuminated manuscripts in 1876, along with a luxury volume on enamels in the private Swenigorodskoi collection (Kondakov 1892); other private collections with Byzantine and Byzantine-inspired objects were also being published at about this time (Khanenko and Khanenko 1899).

In Greece, one has to discuss Antonis Benaki. Born in 1873 in Alexandria where he built an enormous art collection including Byzantine and Coptic objects, he moved with it to Athens in 1926 and donated his villa with his treasures to the Greek state in 1931. The Benaki Museum is now one of the most impressive museums of Greek art under private management anywhere in the world.

In the new world, J. P. Morgan was one of the most important collectors of his time and president of the Metropolitan Museum for over a decade. Beginning in 1906, he acquired a number of Byzantine masterpieces, among them the Second Cyprus Treasure, the Swenigorodskoi collection, and a large part of the Assiut Treasure. In 1917, his son J. P. Morgan Jr. donated most of it, together with 7,000 other works of art, to the Metropolitan Museum.

At the same time, Mildred Barnes and Robert Woods Bliss, a married couple, started to collect Byzantine and pre-Columbian artifacts in Paris. These were held in their residence in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC, beginning in the 1930s. After 1940 this estate became the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, donated to Harvard University, which maintains it to this day. Open to the public, it is the most significant collection of Byzantine art in the United States other than at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and its library and research center are the major center for Byzantine studies in North America.

## CONTEMPORARY PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

---

Collectors of ancient art are to be found primarily in Europe and the United States. Most of these current collections include no Byzantine objects at all. In rare cases it does form a focal area. Bigger collections with exclusively Byzantine artifacts are the exception.

A few but excellent items of Byzantine art are in the antiquities collection of George Ortiz in Switzerland, arguably the most important private one in the world (Ortiz 1996). In the United States, James E. Ferrell has created a magnificent collection of ancient art, with a distinctive emphasis on Byzantine objects, nearly all of them precious masterpieces (Spier 2010). In London there are two collections in no way inferior to the American equivalent. One private collection that includes Byzantine objects as a major focus still awaits publication. The other, built over many decades by Shlomo Moussaieff, is in the process of being sold, with the exception of objects bequeathed to the State of Israel; this includes the biggest assemblage of Byzantine mold-blown glass bottles held anywhere (Newby 2008). The collection of Christian Schmidt in Munich can only partly compete with these superb private collections with regard to the precious material of the artifacts, their quality, and aesthetics. Dedicated to Early Christian and Byzantine culture, its focus is on the informative value of its nearly 3,000 objects. The more important ones have been published and exhibited in many EU and non-EU countries, and in venues like the British Museum in London, the Benaki Museum in Athens, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. The collection will be donated between 2019 and 2021 to the Diocesan Museum of Christian Art Munich-Freising. Currently closed for rebuilding and restoration, the museum's reopening is scheduled for Pentecost, June 5, 2022. Previously, it had shown mainly Western and Middle European Christian art from the late Middle Ages until modern times. This donation, with its artifacts originating in Eastern Europe and the Middle East and ranging from the third to the fifteenth century, will add the missing part of the story of Christianity's origin and early days. The museum will then house one of the largest exhibitions of Christian art in the world, after the Vatican Museums. An online catalogue is in preparation.

## THE QUESTION OF PROVENANCE

---

Most Byzantine artifacts in private collections come from inheritance or trade, with very few from direct contact between collectors and illegal excavators or their agents. If collections have been inherited, it is often impossible to identify more than one earlier owner. If they were bought in auctions, galleries, or from single art dealers, the situation is even worse. The buyer normally learns very little about the provenance of an object, unless this could raise the price being asked. Already in the preface of the Helbing

auction in 1913, the consignor is referred to by the vague appellation “distinguished foreigner.” This concealment is understandable, as each dealer tries to avoid identifying an owner from whom his client might attempt to buy directly in the future. Though a buyer can sometimes find more information about the provenance in auction and gallery catalogues, he or she will almost never hear the name of the earlier owner even upon inquiry.

And while Byzantine artifacts on the antiquities market can come from private collections or from another dealer, they also may have been excavated illegally and smuggled by middlemen directly into the art market.

## LEGAL AND ILLEGAL EXCAVATIONS: TO WHOM DOES ANTIQUITY BELONG?

---

Excavations are legal when they receive permission from the appropriate state authorities; illegal excavations do not have such permissions. While the former are usually conducted by professional archaeological teams aiming at collecting cultural-historical information, the latter are carried out by individuals seeking valuable objects, usually for personal gain. Legal excavations that often last just a few weeks per year can unintentionally become part of the problem, as they mark often badly secured terrain where it is worth digging.

In most countries of origin where the cultural property has been manufactured, private excavations are illegal, and objects found by chance must be reported to the authorities and become property of the state without compensation. In some countries the jurisdiction differs from this standard. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the finder must report a discovery if it fulfills the specified conditions for a treasure (Treasure Act 1996). If the authorities confirm the find to be treasure, it has to be offered for sale to a museum. If the museum does not want or cannot buy the treasure, the landowner may freely dispose of it. Should the finder have the landowner’s permission for digging, the discovery or its proceeds are usually shared.

A similar law exists in Bavaria. Bavaria applies as only one of sixteen German federal states of the Hadrianische Teilung (Hadrian division) amended by the right of first refusal by the state. This regulation has the advantage that many fewer finds disappear into anonymity and the archaeological context is not lost completely—or so it appears in theory. In practice, many more objects are seemingly found and recorded in Bavaria than in the adjacent and equally archaeologically rich federal state of Baden-Württemberg. Apparently, finds from there are brought to and recorded in Bavaria. This example shows to what absurdities it leads when the legislation for archaeological finds is not uniform, not only in many countries but also in their federal states. It also shows that thanks to the ownership claim of the state, not only does context fall by the wayside but even the place of discovery can be lost, when it is

known but cannot be disclosed, because it could engender criminal prosecution and demands for restitution.

Legislation can create the situation for better record keeping. Even finds that fall short of treasure can be covered, as for example in the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), a government program for the recording of the numerous finds made by hobby archaeologists often with metal detectors, in effect for England and Wales since 1996 (UK finds). These finds may be recorded; they remain the property of the finder and/or landowner, and may be sold. Many unidentified archaeological sites became known this way, and a database has been developed that has increased the knowledge of the past considerably. In 2006 the PAS became an official department in the British Museum, the Department of Portable Antiquities and Treasure.

## THE LEGALIZATION OF THE ILLEGAL

---

Byzantine artifacts can be found in their mostly Near Eastern countries of origin by chance, for instance during excavation for a subway, construction, plowing, etc., but also by illegal digging. If finds are not reported, they usually get into the local market, where they change ownership several times (always for higher prices), until they come into the hands of the ultimate local buyer who has contacts with experienced local smugglers and foreign customers. Smugglers often cooperate with border and custom officials at air- and seaports who are regularly paid by them. If these individuals are caught by the police, for example through tapped phones, criminal prosecution can mostly be avoided by cash settlement; if the perpetrator has no money, the penalty is rarely harsh. Then the smugglers “go to sleep” for some months. Final destinations of these transports have for a long time been Western-bonded warehouses, where the goods “mature” for a while, before they are re invoiced and channeled into the international antiquities trade. Today, illegally excavated ancient or Byzantine artifacts are shipped to Asian and Gulf States, where they are provided with the necessary invoices and export papers. Stamped officially, these documents are accepted without investigation by Western customs authorities, which are primarily interested in the correct payment of the import tax.

## BYZANTINE AND ANCIENT OBJECTS ON THE ART MARKET

---

Byzantine works play a minor role in the antiquities market, which itself is marginal to the art market in general. The internationally leading auction houses for antiquities are Christie’s and Sotheby’s. In 2006, three years after the war in Iraq, Christie’s sold antiquities for £4,160,000 in London and for \$11,205,000 in New York. The two summer

auctions in 2016 in London with 306 lots, among them 9 Byzantine objects (Christie's 2016), netted £4,757,063, the spring sale in New York \$5,674,566. From mid-1997 to mid-2016, Sotheby's had no antiquities sales in London at all. Its turnover in 2006 in New York was \$10,277,882; its July 2016 auction in London fetched £3,400,750, with the buyer's premium of up to 25 percent included in these numbers. For someone not familiar with the art market, these figures might appear high. In reality they are minuscule compared to the actual turnover of the two auction houses in 2006 of more than a billion dollars for the art of the twentieth century. In fact, Christie's, whose antiquities sales date back to the eighteenth century, intended to cease them completely after the financial crisis of 2008. Only public protest led to a reconsideration.

The alleged turnover of billions supposedly made by the trade in antiquities and used to finance terrorism turns out to be a fantasy put out by hardliners among archaeologists in order to defame trade, museums, and collectors. Not proved and unverifiable, these rumors are taken up and passed on by the media. The New Act to Protect German Cultural Property passed by the German Parliament on June 23, 2016, is also influenced by these spurious ideas (Bundestag 2016); already on the first page of the draft from September 15, 2015, the text reads: "this New Act can restrict possibilities for funding of foreign terrorist organizations, which increasingly finance themselves by illegal excavations of archaeological sites and by the trade in cultural goods" (Bundestag draft 2015). As a matter of fact, the so-called Islamic State (IS), alluded to in the draft text, does not have the slightest knowledge of and capabilities for such complex and complicated antiquities trade. Therefore, this "state" confines itself to the media-appropriate destruction of monuments, on the one hand for pseudo-religious reasons, on the other to provoke the hated "West," which reputedly claims sovereignty over the interpretation of antiquity, interferes in foreign affairs, and is made responsible for most of the problems in the Near East. "The IS aims to destroy the roots of Western society," as Jean-David Cahn, owner of an antiquities gallery that goes back over 150 years in Basel, has written (Cahn 2016, 4-5), a wording that unintentionally confirms the accusations by the IS that Western countries express with their outcry against the destruction of ancient monuments in the Near East cultural imperialistic claims of ownership.

Concerning the area-wide traces of illegal digging on archaeological sites in Near East evidenced by satellite photos and used by fundamentalist archaeologists to make collectors feel guilty (Seeher 2007), the fewest are left by the IS. The spreading devastation is much more the result of the complete breakdown of public order and control in these countries ravaged and raped by war. It is inevitable that the residents of these regions are digging, in the hope of finding something usable, or maybe even of valuable gold or silver, which they can sell or melt down. Meanwhile, there has been no bigger demand for antiquities on the Western market, and no increase of illegally exported ancient or Byzantine artifacts has been seen. Quite the opposite is the case, in fact; there are fewer objects appearing, partly as a result of the ordinary routes of trade becoming less passable.

Collectors and dealers in antiquities see themselves today as last of the Mohicans. Many collectors have given up, many galleries closed. The reasons are not so much the

difficulties of export mentioned already by Hugo Helbing in 1913 or the supposed bad conscience on the part of collectors and dealers. The reason is rather the decreasing interest in ancient and medieval art, the growing lack of humanistic education, the fundamental change of our culture. With a collection of antiquities one cannot show off today, the modern status symbols become other arts: design, contemporary works, and pieces of classical modernism.

## ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

---

While art history and archaeology have been in earlier times disciplines in close connection to each other, in the course of increasing specialization they have developed in different directions. Most of the Byzantine artifacts in museums, private collections, and trade are finds without archaeological context. Art historians usually deal with artifacts, whereas the main interest of the archaeologists has shifted meanwhile to their context.

Some of the archaeologists who consider themselves to be modern and progressive bemoan more than ever the loss of the archaeological context and repeat like a mantra that each object torn from its context has lost most of its cultural-historical information. Context can be seen as the Sacred Cow of modern archaeology, the Golden Calf around which an increasingly uncompromising community is dancing. As each scientific discipline has its hobbyhorse, this would not be a problem but for the apodictic attitude with which this view is expressed. To claim objects without context are scientifically completely uninteresting is an affront against all art historians who ever have devoted themselves to their research. Most art historians reject openly or secretly the requirement archaeologists express that as scholars they should not publish and exhibit finds without context.

This rigid opinion has something to do with the fact that there has been for quite a while no division of finds between Western archaeologists and the countries in which they excavate. It has also become more and more difficult for these archaeologists to get an excavation permit at all. Therefore they have switched to other fields of activity like surface surveys, etc. These scientists proclaim loudly that instead of finding objects they want to collect information. They ignore the fact that an ancient artifact without context can very well be an important source of information. A science that gives absolute importance to the context demonstrates its own poverty.

Information resulting from context is different from that supplied by the object. Numismatics and sigillography are sciences that can advance without the additional information of context research. The unresolved issues of the Byzantine metrology cannot be answered by the context in which single weights have been found, but at best by the comparison and analysis of all available examples, a study still awaited. The same applies to many other portable objects that can be studied, considering their formal language, their style, iconography, palaeography, epigraphy, and many other detailed investigations, but not from the context in which they inadvertently got into or in which



they were found. Context has always been a part of archaeology, but only a part and not the whole. Of course modern archaeology is free to put the emphasis of its activity on research into context. But it should not go to an extreme, and deny access to objects for scholars in other disciplines.

## THE END OF COLLECTING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

---

The claim to stop or forbid the collecting and the trade in antiquities is absurd alone for the reason that a considerable part of what is traded is old stock. The number of portable antiquities privately acquired in European countries since the Renaissance, especially in those with a colonial past, ranges into the millions. To acquire these objects can be neither illegal nor unethical. Most of them still exist somewhere. But they are like the 917 ancient and 142 Byzantine lots of the Helbing auction of 1913, anonymized again by time and indistinguishable from recently illegally excavated ones.

In order to meet the UNESCO Convention 1970 (UNESCO 1970) accepted by the United Kingdom in 2003, leading auction houses in London take antiquities only if they were on the Western market before 2000. Invoices, insurance policies, etc. can serve as proof. Illegal excavations and trade cannot be stopped by this restriction. But private collectors, not having kept such documents they were not obliged to, have the most difficulty with this condition. The same applies to the New Act to Protect German Cultural Property (Bundestag 2016). Section 29 says that cultural property is not subject to an import ban if it has been in Germany legally before the New Act came into force in August 2016. As there was no need to register cultural property before that date, the law unfolds with retroactive force; it declares all unregistered stock as illegally imported. According to Section 32, the import of cultural property after that date is illegal even if its origin might be in several modern countries, if no clear allocation can be made, and if according to the law of each country affected the piece(s) should not have been exported without permission. Export permissions by countries of origin, though, have either never or rarely existed, with the exception of Israel; other countries, if such permissions were required, frequently granted them easily. With the legality of these provisions highly questionable, in conflict not only with the right to property but also with the treaty on the free movement of goods in the EU, the end of collecting and trading in antiquities in Germany is sealed.

To avoid many of these problems, the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003 passed by the United Kingdom “does not impose an import or export restriction on trade in cultural objects . . . such a prohibition would be unworkable for users, administrators and HM Customs. In addition, such a wide prohibition would constitute a restraint on trade, which is contrary to EC law” (EUI 2003).

Context research does not have the right of sole representation of antiquity, neither in foreign countries, nor in their own, and it is not doing itself any favors by claiming it. Archaeology is leading an increasingly shadowy existence; at many universities it is considered an “orchid subject,” and public funds for excavation are being cut back. Of the donations and enormous subsidies provided by rich private collectors of antiquities in the United States or the United Kingdom for official excavation campaigns or the redesign of exhibition rooms in museums, other countries can only dream. In countries with regulation frenzy, antiquity is at risk of sinking into insignificance in the public mind. Context research in its ivory tower, with results of which are published, if at all, in journals hard to access, and finds rotting in depots even more difficult to access, will not stop the train of time and convince the public to provide money to a discipline in which it is no longer interested. Rather the trade, the museums, and the remaining private collectors can succeed to contribute to a living environment. Thanks to the cooperation of pragmatic museum directors and private collectors, a number of interesting projects were realized in recent years in Europe, among them one in 2004 in the Archaeological State Collection Munich, with the participation of thirty-three other national and international institutions, the exhibition *Die Welt von Byzanz – Europas östliches Erbe*. Its public success, with more than 80,000 visitors, has contributed to the filling of the vacant professorship for Late Antique and Byzantine Art at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, which had been threatened with non-renewal.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

---

There may be different options to meet the legitimate demands of archaeologists to secure the context of archaeological sites. The termination of collecting and trading are not among them. Excavations have always taken place in various countries, from antiquity to the present, even when there were no collectors. People dug, hoping to find objects of utility or value, for their own use or for local or foreign markets, which now also include the Gulf States, Russia, and the Far East. Before it became fashionable in Europe to collect ancient marble statues, they ended up in grinding mills. The collector's value protects many objects, whether accidentally found or excavated, from destruction. Should they lose this status one day, they will only have their material value; they will be used for buildings or otherwise consumed as they had been in the past.

The rejection of required measures to secure the context does not mean that serious collectors approve of illegal excavations. Each of them would prefer to acquire ancient or Byzantine artifacts officially excavated and exported. But this wish remains illusory as long as the state claims ownership of antiquity. Luca Giuliani, a well-known archaeologist, has called the claim of ownership by the state counterproductive; simultaneously he complained the loss of the context deeply: “The applicable laws could not prevent this destruction of archaeological features. One might even go one step further and ask if they were not partly responsible for it.” He tried problem-solving on a model that proved

impracticable at the end. The state may be the owner of the finds, Giuliani posits, not the finder or the owner of the property. The latter must therefore be compensated, namely at market value; otherwise they would not report the finds. The ownership claim of the state proves effective, but only for the finds, not for the context, and only if the state is very rich or the find of little value. Giuliani's article ends with this depressing statement: "There have been in the last decades many archaeological catastrophes which possibly could have been avoided or at least alleviated by relaxing the claim of ownership by the state" (Giuliani 2003, 11).

The protection of archaeological sites falls within the purview of the countries in which they lie, and this varies widely. The state's monopoly on excavations and its claim of ownership do not provide adequate protection. Liberal regulations similar to those practiced in parts of Great Britain would prove significantly more purposeful. However, it would be useless to worry about how such protection should look in detail, as long as in many of these countries chaos dominates. Even if it were possible to end wars and terror in the foreseeable future, poverty, corruption, and a widely-shared reserve would remain, inhibiting understanding of the legacies of other cultures and religions as national cultural property worth protecting.

For consumer countries there is not much to be done to solve these problems. Import bans from certain countries like Syria and Iraq already exist (*Official Journal of the European Union* 2003 and 2013), while for antiquities most probably stolen or smuggled, ordinary laws can be applied. Further measures are blind activism. Restrictions of collecting and trading in ancient objects without provenance are legally problematic because of the huge unregistered old stock. Blanket import bans from all eligible countries overstrain authorities and can easily be evaded in a globalized world. Archaeological finds should therefore be treated, as has long been the case, as ordinary merchandise, once they are in consumer countries and indistinguishable from old stock, even if it cannot be ascertained whether some were recently excavated. As provocative as this may sound, there is no better solution right now. And as unfortunate as the lack of context for ancient finds is, to throw them on the garbage heap of history, instead of acquiring, collecting, exploring, publishing, and exhibiting them, would not prevent any single illegal excavation, but destroy enormous information treasures and make the damage total and irrevocable.

## REFERENCES

---

- Bundestag. 2016. <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/brd/2016/0346-16.pdf>.
- Bundestag draft. 2015. [http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/\\_Anlagen/2015-09-15-bkm-link-referentenentwurf-kulturgutschutzgesetz.pdf?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/_Anlagen/2015-09-15-bkm-link-referentenentwurf-kulturgutschutzgesetz.pdf?_blob=publicationFile&v=2).
- Cahn, J.-D. 2016. "Jean-David Cahn on TEFAF and Archaeology." *Cahn's Quarterly* 2: 4-5. <https://files.artbutler.com/file/1335/74386d563c6e4b9d.pdf>.
- Christie's. 2016. *Christie's, Antiquities/Ancient Glass from the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection* (London 6 July). <http://www.christies.com/antiquities-26157.aspx?saletitle=> and <http://www.christies.com/ancient-glass-from-the-26744.aspx?saletitle=>.

- Dalton, O. M. 1901. *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (London).
- Dalton, O. M. 1911. *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford).
- Dalton, O. M. 1912. *Franks Bequest. Catalogue of the Finger Rings: Early Christian, Byzantine, Teutonic, Mediaeval and Later* (London).
- EUI. 2003. <http://www.eui.eu/Projects/InternationalArtHeritageLaw/Documents/NationalLegislation/UnitedKingdom/dealingwithculturalobjectsact-explanatorymemo.pdf>.
- Giuliani, L. 2003. "Geld ist der beste Schatzhüter: Nur der Markt kann die weltweiten Raubgrabungen verhindern." *Süddeutsche Zeitung* no. 166 (22 July): 11.
- Helbing, H. 1913. *Antike und byzantinische Kleinkunst aus ausländischem und Münchener Privatbesitz* (Munich). Auction catalogue. [http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/helbing1913\\_10\\_28/0068?sid=c87374f503791b9fa5a5c30d4ea43ea3](http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/helbing1913_10_28/0068?sid=c87374f503791b9fa5a5c30d4ea43ea3).
- Khanenko, B. I., and V. N. Khanenko. 1899. *Collection B. Khanenko, Drevnosti Russkiya. Antiquités russes. Kresti i [i nicht löschen]obrazki. Croix et images* (Kiev).
- Kondakov, N. P. 1892. *Geschichte und Denkmäler des byzantinischen Emails: Sammlung A. W. Swenigorodskoi* (Frankfurt am Main).
- Newby, M. S. 2008. *The Shlomo Moussaieff Collection: Byzantine Mould-Blown Glass from the Holy Land with Jewish and Christian Symbols* (Slough, UK).
- Official Journal of the European Union*. 8 July 2003 and 13 December 2013. [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2003/july/tradoc\\_113251.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2003/july/tradoc_113251.pdf) and [http://obs-traffic.museum/sites/default/files/ressources/files/EU\\_Council\\_regulation\\_1332\\_2013\\_2013.pdf](http://obs-traffic.museum/sites/default/files/ressources/files/EU_Council_regulation_1332_2013_2013.pdf).
- Ortiz, G. 1996. *Faszination der Antike—Die George Ortiz Collection* (Berlin).
- Seeher, J. 2007. "Warum man aufhören muß, Antiken zu sammeln." *Antike Welt* 2: 27–32.
- Spier, J. 2010. *Treasures of the Ferrell Collection* (Wiesbaden).
- Treasure Act 1996. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/24/contents>.
- UK Finds. <http://finds.org.uk>.
- UNESCO. 1970. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/1970-convention/text-of-the-convention/>.
- United Kingdom Legislation 1996. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/24/contents>.
- Wulff, O. 1909–1923. *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche byzantinische und italienische Bildwerke* (Berlin).
- Wulff, O. 1914. *Altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst* (Berlin).



## CHAPTER 11

---

# THE BYZANTINE ARTS AND BYZANTINE LITERATURE

---

HENRY MAGUIRE

## INTRODUCTION

---

THIS chapter examines the relationships between literary and visual forms in Byzantium. It is concerned with the techniques that structured the presentation of oral and written texts on the one hand, and of visual works on the other. It does not cover the significance of inscriptions attached to works of art (Maguire 2007; Papalexandrou 2007; Eastmond 2015), the role played by Byzantine texts such as epigrams in conveying viewer response (Maguire 1996; Drpić 2016), or the light thrown by texts such as the lives of the saints on social issues, including the functions of religious images in various contexts (Cormack 1985; Kazhdan and Maguire 1991). The phenomena to be explored here are purely formal, being concerned with the construction and presentation of the literary and artistic works themselves, not with their wider contexts of viewing and using.

Most of the techniques that are of relevance to this discussion had their origin in ancient rhetoric, which was inherited by the Byzantines from Classical Antiquity (Jeffreys 2003). Rhetoric was in all periods a cornerstone of Byzantine education, and its methods were deeply embedded in Byzantine literature from the fourth-century church fathers until the end of the empire. Its impact was as strong in the hymns and sermons of the church as in the panegyrics of the court. It is not an exaggeration to say that rhetoric framed the way in which educated Byzantines thought; its conventions shaped the way that they described the world, even if their debt to rhetoric was not always conscious. In the same way today, we may quote sayings from Shakespeare without necessarily being conscious of their origin.

In the pages that follow we will consider seven literary techniques that had particular relevance to the visual arts. In the conclusion we shall pose some questions concerning the significance of the parallels between literature and the visual arts; is it possible to

speak of an influence of the one on the other, or are the similarities the result of the same mental habits being expressed in different media?

## REPETITION AND VARIATION

---

Repetition was a favored device in the toolbox of ancient orators, just as it is in the speeches of politicians today. The ancient textbooks of rhetoric, such as the *Ad Herennium*, which was composed in the first century BCE, distinguished between different types of repetition, such as *epanaphora*, *antistrophē*, and *symplokē*. In *epanaphora* a word is repeated at the beginnings of successive phrases expressing similar or different ideas; in *antistrophe* the last word of the phrases is repeated; while *symploke*, or interlacement, combines both figures, repeating both the first and the last words (Caplan 1954, 4.19). A famous example of the employment of both *epanaphora* and *antistrophe* in Byzantine literature is the *Akathistos* hymn in honor of the Virgin, which can be dated to the fifth or the sixth century (Peltomaa 2001). In this poem each alternate strophe has the same structure, five introductory lines followed by twelve invocations, or *chairetismoi*. Even though the individual *chairetismoi* contain concepts, metaphors, and language that are richly varied, they all begin with the same word “*Chaire*,” or “Hail.” Moreover, each set of twelve *chairetismoi* ends with the same refrain: “Hail, bride unwedded.” Thus the entire poem, which has a total of twenty-four strophes, presents a rich tapestry of varied words and ideas woven into an armature of repeated words and phrases, like different-colored threads woven into a pattern of plain warps.

The sixth-century mosaics of Ravenna and of Poreč in Istria provide striking visual counterparts to the structuring of the *Akathistos* hymn. In the church of Sant’Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, the Byzantines inserted two long files of saints on the north and south walls of the basilica, after they had conquered the city from the Arian Ostrogoths in the middle of the sixth century (Deichmann 1974, 127–89). In these mosaics, the two lines of male and female saints, respectively on the south and north sides of the nave, process holding their crowns toward images of Christ and of the Virgin. At first sight, the saints appear to be uniform in their appearance, but, as in the *Akathistos* hymn, the repetition of their bodies turns out to be a frame for variation (Scranton 1964, 329; Roberts 1989, 85–86). In the case of the female martyrs, for example, the colors of the insides of the crowns that they carry alternate from red to green. Moreover, except in the case of the first four women, there is an alternation between the flowers at their feet: the martyrs carrying red crowns stand beside lilies, while those with green crowns stand beside roses (see Figure 7.2). In addition, while each woman wears a sash beneath her mantle, each mantle has a different decoration; no two are alike. In their overall effect, the saints in the mosaics of Sant’Apollinare Nuovo are like the *chairetismoi* of the *Akathistos*, embodying the regularity of repetition and the richness of variety at the same time.

A similar effect can be observed in the mid-sixth-century mosaics in the main apse of the Cathedral of Poreč, across the Adriatic Sea from Ravenna (Terry and Maguire 2007). Here again, apparent regularity is enriched by variation. If we look, for example, beneath the central image of the Virgin and Child in the main apse, we find a row of nine scallop shells forming a border, three on each side and three, now obscured by the later ciborium, in the middle (Figure 11.1/Color Plate 5). The most obvious variation is that in each group at the sides of the apse, the central shell is portrayed upside down. A further variation is that the central shells in each group differ from the others in their color, since they are predominantly green and blue as opposed to gold. There is even variation in the materials used by the artists to create the shells. The two gold shells on the outside of each group contain many gold tesserae in their highlights, while the central shells employ yellow



FIGURE 11.1 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 5). Cathedral of Poreč, mosaics of the main apse and triumphal arch, mid-sixth century. Photo: Renco Kosinožić.



glass instead of real gold in the highlights. Thus, even while the border is made up of the same repeating motif of shells, variation in the orientation, in the colors, and even in the materials, all work to embroider the basic design.

## ACROSTIC

---

A common technique that was used both by Early Byzantine artists and by writers to structure their compositions was acrostic. For example, in the sixth-century hymns of Romanos the first letters of each verse, when read downwards, give either the author's name or the subject of the poem (Maas and Trypanis 1963). Acrostics based on the shape of the cross were also popular, especially in the formula that combined the words ΖΩΗ, (Life), and ΦΩC (Light), arranged as a cross, with the omega in the middle. This device referred to the saying of Jesus in the gospel of John 8:12, "I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The acrostic of ΖΩΗ and ΦΩC was widespread in the Early Byzantine period; it appeared on liturgical silver, on jewelry, and on clothing (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989, 21, 87, 163). Acrostics also structured the imagery in the monumental art of church mosaics. In the main apse at Poreč, for example, the composition can be read along both its horizontal and its vertical axes, each of which produces different meanings (Terry and Maguire 2007). The focus of the design is the Virgin seated with the Christ Child, who, in their centrality, correspond to the position of the omega in the ΖΩΗ and ΦΩC acrostic. Reading the images across the apse, from left to right, we find the donor of the church, the bishop Eufrasius, holding a model of the church that he has constructed, accompanied by the archdeacon Claudius, and the infant son of the archdeacon, also named Eufrasius, who carries two candles. To the right appear the figures whom they supplicate: in the first place, Christ and his mother, and then a trio of anonymous saints. In this case, the Virgin and Child appear as part of a private composition, the recipients of prayers and offerings from human petitioners. If, on the other hand, we read the mosaics along the central vertical axis, we see that composition portrays Christ in his two natures; in the apse below, he appears as a human child in the lap of his mother, while directly above, on the triumphal arch, he appears enthroned in his glory flanked by his retinue of apostles. Immediately beneath the Virgin and Child, between the central windows, an angel holds an orb containing three concentric blue rings, a symbol of the Trinity. On the vertical axis, therefore, the mosaic provides a dogmatic discourse, making a statement about the natures of Christ. The two readings, private and doctrinal, cross over each other at the central group of the Virgin and Child, so that in each case the central figures carry a different significance.

Acrostics also structured the imagery in other apses of the Early Byzantine period, as, for example, in the approximately contemporary mosaics of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, outside Ravenna (Deichmann 1976, 233–80). Here, at the bottom of the mosaic, St. Apollinaris, supposedly the first bishop of Ravenna, stands in a position of prayer,

spreading his arms to either side. He is flanked by a procession of sheep, while directly above him there is a medallion containing a large cross, which bears a small bust of Christ at its center. Above the cross the hand of God appears in the sky, and to either side of it we see Moses and Elijah and three sheep, representing the Apostles Peter, James, and John. The whole composition functions as an acrostic with a central vertical axis and two transverse axes. The vertical axis, among other themes, presents Apollinaris as a favored confessor of Christ who imitates the shape of the cross above with his upraised arms, while praying for his flock. The uppermost of the two horizontal axes comprises the figures of Moses and Elijah and the three sheep, which, together with the cross that they flank, evoke the Transfiguration of Christ on Mt. Tabor. The lower horizontal axis comprises the sheep flanking St. Apollinaris, numbering six on each side. They can be seen either as the bishop's flock, or as the twelve apostles. The latter reading gives the mosaic a political meaning, for it shows the bishop of Ravenna included among the apostles, and thus potentially of equal status to them. The status accorded to the first bishop of Ravenna in this mosaic carried the political implication that his successors, the subsequent archbishops of Ravenna, enjoyed a similar status vis-à-vis the successors of the apostles, including the popes in Rome (on the ambitions of the archbishops of Ravenna, see Deliyannis 2010, 209–13). Here, therefore, three different readings converge on the central figures, in this case Christ in the cross and St. Apollinaris. The vertical axis expresses the effectiveness of the saint's prayer to Christ and the cross, the upper horizontal axis portrays the Transfiguration centered on Christ and the cross, while the lower horizontal axis, centered on the praying saint, may express political claims about the status of the bishops of Ravenna.

## ANTITHESIS AND COMPARISON

---

Two of the most common techniques employed by Byzantine orators were *antithesis* and *synkrisis*, or comparison, which were closely related. The employment of antithesis and comparison became particularly important in later Byzantine art, after the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. The application of these techniques to visual images often resulted in paired compositions that were harmonized and visually similar to each other. In literature, comparisons could be made of many subjects, including people, events, occupations, seasons, and qualities such as virtues and vices. Comparisons played an especially important role in *encomia*, which were speeches of praise in honor of secular individuals such as emperors and high officials, or of religious figures such as saints, or of events such as the feasts of the church calendar. If the subject of the encomium was a person, he or she could be compared to meritorious models. Thus an emperor commonly was compared to King David, or a saint to a greater saint, such as St. Peter, or to Christ himself. Comparisons could either be brief or relatively long; in the latter case, the comparison would proceed point by point as each aspect of the subjects was examined in turn. In addition to being incorporated into longer

compositions, comparisons were written as stand-alone exercises in the rhetorical curriculum, and many of these school pieces have been preserved in textbooks. The fifth-century textbook by Nicholas the Sophist, for example, preserves model comparisons of the orators Aischines and Demosthenes, as well as of sailing and farming, of summer and winter, and of cowardice and idleness (Maguire 1988).

Antithesis was a figure of speech that contrasted two different concepts, often in paradoxical ways. It was especially favored by Christian writers as a means of expressing the central paradox of their faith, the incarnation of Christ (Maguire 1981, 53–83). The device of antithesis enabled them to encapsulate complex mysteries in pithy formulations, such as the following series, which is drawn from the third theological oration by the fourth-century Church Father Gregory of Nazianzus:

He [Christ] reclined in a crib, but he was extolled by angels. . . . He was hungry, but he fed thousands. . . . He was weary, but he is the rest of the weary and of the burdened. . . . He has shown weakness and has been wounded, but he heals every malady and every weakness. . . . He dies, but he gives life, and by death he destroys death. (*PG* 36: 100–1)

In comparisons the aim was to draw attention to the similarities between people or events, while in antithesis it was the opposite, namely to point out the differences. In practice, when antithesis was expressed in the visual arts, the effect was often similar to comparison, because the artists had to relate the images visually in order to draw attention to their contrasting contents. Relationships between images could either be established by juxtaposition, or by making them similar in their overall composition or in their details. In the latter case, the pairing of images on account of their antithetical content paradoxically resembled the pairing of images whose content was similar. In fact, even in texts antitheses often were incorporated into comparisons, so that it is difficult to disentangle the two. A case in point is a passage in a sermon by Andrew of Crete, which was written at the end of the seventh or in the eighth century, but which became familiar to later generations of Byzantines through its repetition in the liturgy. From the ninth to the sixteenth centuries it was a popular reading for Palm Sunday. In this homily, which honors the Entry into Jerusalem, Andrew of Crete gives a detailed comparison of the Nativity of Christ and of the Raising of Lazarus, examining the two events detail by detail:

Just look how related and how congruent are these events. There we have Bethlehem, here we have Bethany. Then we had Maria and Salome [the midwives], now we have Maria and Martha [the sisters of Lazarus]. There we have Christ wrapped up in his swaddling clothes, here we have Lazarus received in his winding cloth. There is the crib; here is the tomb. You can see the resemblance of the settings and of the people. . . . There the shepherds marveled, here the priests mocked. There the Magi brought presents and fell before him, here the people who fight God were angry against him. (*PG* 97: 989)

In this passage, Andrew of Crete associates the two episodes through comparisons and antitheses in explicitly visual terms, saying: “Just look” and “You can see.” If we turn to icons, we can see that Byzantine artists were comparing the two events in similar ways. An early fourteenth-century mosaic icon now in Florence incorporates images of the Nativity and of the Raising of Lazarus into the six scenes from the life of Christ displayed on its left-hand leaf (Figure 11.2) (*Byzantium, 330–1453*, no. 227). The crib in the Nativity, seen in the upper-right panel, echoes the form of the sarcophagus from which Lazarus rises, at the lower right. We see the two midwives above and the two sisters below. The swaddling cloth around the baby echoes the winding cloth around the corpse. At the top the Magi approach with their gifts, below the spectators cover their noses. There are also formal similarities: the cave of the tomb of Lazarus, which is set into a hillside, echoes the cave of Christ’s birth; one of the shepherds on the right of the Nativity is portrayed from the back with his head viewed in profile, as is the man unwinding the shroud in the Raising of Lazarus. The effect of these parallels is to harmonize the two scenes and to smooth out the differences (Maguire 2003).

This harmonization is no accident, but is a fundamental characteristic of Byzantine art, as can be appreciated if we compare the icon with contemporary frescoes of the same episodes painted by Giotto in the Arena Chapel at Padua (Basile 1993, 122, 126). In the Italian Gothic paintings there is no similarity between the sarcophagus and the crib—the former is of marble, the latter of wood; the two sisters appear in the Resurrection scene, but there are no corresponding midwives in the Nativity; and the settings of the two scenes are completely dissimilar, the birth taking place in a wooden shed, and the Resurrection of Lazarus in the open air.

As noted, comparisons were often employed in the lives of the saints, and this was the case both in their written and their visual forms. In both art and literature these comparisons could be made either explicitly or implicitly. In a text, for example, a biographer of St. Nicholas might say explicitly that the saint’s birth resembled that of John the Baptist, because his mother, Nonna, became sterile after the birth, just as Elizabeth did after she gave birth to St. John. Or a writer might make an implicit comparison between Nicholas and Christ by incorporating into his narrative of the saint calming the storm a few words quoted from the Gospel account of Christ stilling the waves. An example of an explicit comparison in Byzantine art is provided by the early fourteenth-century frescoes in St. George at Staro Nagoričino. In this church there is a series of scenes from the martyrdom of the patron saint arranged in such a way that they run directly underneath another series of scenes depicting the Passion and death of Christ. The two sets of frescoes are coordinated in such a way that the beheading of St. George is displayed immediately beneath the Crucifixion of Christ (Maguire 1988). In this case, both actors in the comparison are on view, but in some Byzantine hagiographic paintings only the saint is present, the comparison with Christ being implied. For example, when artists depicted the miracle of St. Nicholas calming the storm, they based the iconography on the scene of Christ calming the waves, so that the one was a quotation of the other (Ševčenko 1983, 101).

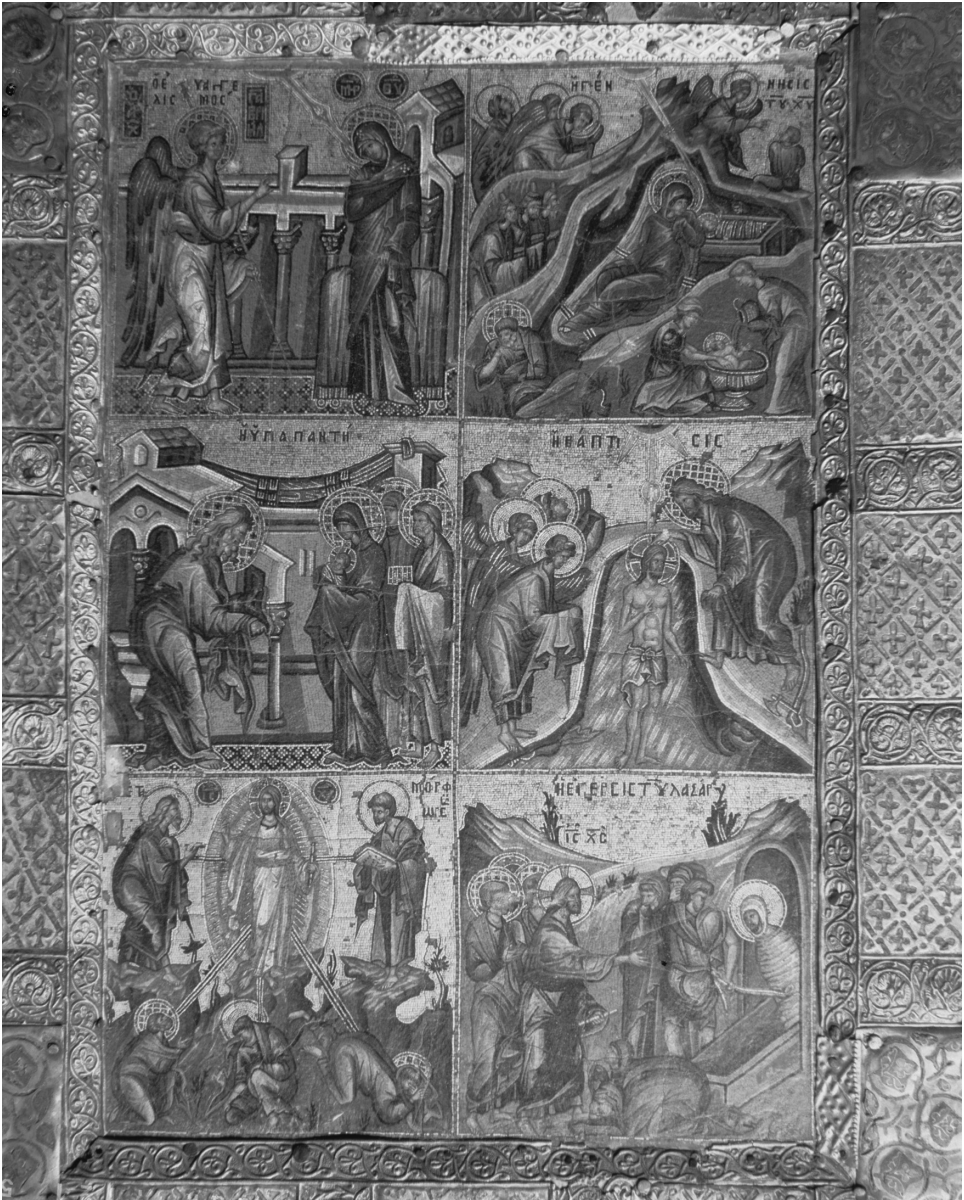


FIGURE 11.2. Mosaic icon with scenes from the life of Christ, fourteenth century. Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Art Resource, NY.

As in the case of New Testament scenes, the result of the employment of comparisons in the saints' lives was to harmonize the compositions. If the individual episodes were to resemble the life of Christ and also the lives of other saints, there could not be too much variation between them; the Nativity of St. Nicholas, for example, had to echo the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and both had to echo that of Christ (Ševčenko 1983, 155).

The employment of comparison and antithesis to structure visual compositions, therefore, tended to work against the principle of variety, which we have seen was important in Early Byzantine art. The replacement of variety with harmonization was one of the major differences between pre-Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic art in Byzantium.

## SELECTIVE REALISM

---

Another feature of post-Iconoclastic Byzantine art that echoed the techniques of rhetoric was the incorporation of realistic elements into otherwise relatively abstract compositions. These elements, which included naturalistic landscape features or vividly rendered emotions, were inspired by rhetorical genres such as *ekphrasis* and *ēthopoiia*, and can be termed selective or rhetorical realism. *Ekphrasis* was the name given to a formal description, whose aim, in the words of the ancient rhetorician Hermogenes, was to bring “persons, deeds, times, seasons, and many other things” vividly before the hearer as if he or she was seeing them for himself (Vavrínek et. al 2011). *Ethopoiia*, or character study, was an imagined interior monologue expressing the feelings of a person at a crucial point in his or her career. The protagonists could be drawn either from pagan mythology or from the Bible. Thus exercises in *ethopoiia* had such titles as: “What Niobe would say when her children lay dead” (Rabe 1926, 34–36), as well as “What the Mother of God might have said when she embraced her son, the God and Savior Christ, at his burial” (Pignani 1971; Beneker and Gibson 2016, 210–13).

A well-known late twelfth-century icon of the Annunciation in the collection at Mt. Sinai evokes both *ekphrasis* and *ethopoiia* in the same composition (Figure 11.3) (Weitzmann 1965). In formal terms, this panel presents the viewer with striking contradictions. Most of the surface is a shimmering sheet of gold, against which the design is outlined in *grisaille*. The throne on which the Virgin sits, her house behind her, and the approaching angel are all drawn in gold, so that they appear to float against the golden background. But the immateriality of these images is abruptly broken at the bottom of the panel, where we see the jagged bank of a river that creates an effect of perspective. In the waters of the stream, various naturalistically painted creatures are disputing themselves, including a swordfish, an octopus, a fish leaping above the water, as well as birds such as ducks and herons. Beside the river, other birds can be seen among the plants on the bank flapping their wings or bending their necks back to preen themselves. Thus there is a sudden disjunction between the apparent immateriality of the scene above and the down-to-earth quality of the waterscape below, which appears to be drawn from the physical rather than the spiritual world. Moreover, if we look more closely at the drawings in *grisaille* above, we find even within the shimmering gold elements that evoke a more physical reality. For example, the face of the angel has deeply furrowed brows, lined cheeks, and a mouth that is turned down at the corners, as if to show that Gabriel, even as he is giving his joyful message, is harboring some thoughts that are troubled and perhaps not entirely happy. He assumes a twisting pose,



FIGURE 11.3. Icon of the Annunciation to the Virgin. Monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai, late twelfth century. Reproduced through courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria expedition to Mt. Sinai.

as if he wished to draw back from the Virgin. In addition, if we look more closely at the Virgin's house, we see that its flatness and two-dimensionality is broken by a small balcony rendered in perspective, which projects above the door on the right. On this balcony there is a garden, containing two cypress trees and two fruit trees, in one of which is a pair of perched birds. Furthermore, the gabled roof of the house is somewhat incongruously topped by a large nest, in which two storks are sitting.

The startling intrusion of these elements drawn from real life into a scene that is otherwise immaterial finds counterparts in Byzantine sermons on the Annunciation, into which

preachers inserted passages of both ekphrasis and ethopoiia to enliven their compositions. A particular favorite was the ekphrasis of the season of spring, because the feast of the Annunciation was celebrated on March 25. For Byzantine homilists the coincidence of the Annunciation with the renewal of nature was especially significant, because it was thought that God became incarnate on the very day of the year on which he had created man, so that Adam was redeemed on the anniversary of his creation. Since ancient orators, such as Libanius (Foerster 1915, 479–80), had already set the pattern of composing descriptions of the springtime, it was natural for Byzantine preachers compose their own encomia of the season and insert them into their sermons on the feast. The Byzantine writers followed the models provided by the ancient writers, repeating many of the same conventions. For example, in the tenth century, the poet and rhetorician John Geometres embellished a sermon on the Annunciation with a lengthy ekphrasis of spring, including customary references to the golden color of the sky, the flowering of the land, the singing of the birds, the leaves on the trees, the clarity of the streams, and the birds, the fishes, and the animals bringing forth their young (*PG* 106: 841). The same tropes were repeated by later writers. Thus, in the fourteenth century, Isidore the Archbishop of Thessalonica spoke of the sun stripping the clouds from its rays and of the nestlings spreading their wings and preparing themselves for variegated song (*PG* 139: 112–13).

In addition to describing the delights of springtime, some Byzantine preachers liked to insert passages of character study into their sermons on the Annunciation, in which they explored the inner emotions of the angel Gabriel as he prepared to deliver his momentous message to the Virgin (Maguire 1983). The most well known of these sermons was composed by Andrew of Crete; it appears in over thirty manuscripts of liturgical readings dating from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries. Other later Byzantine homilists, also, elaborated upon the theme, including the monk James of Kokkinobaphos in the twelfth century. As Andrew of Crete explains, when Gabriel received his commission from God to proclaim the incarnation to Mary, he was troubled, and “stood half way between fear and joy.” In particular, he pondered at length about how he should approach the Virgin, as he did not wish to frighten her. He also deliberated with himself about how he should address her, and what he should say (*PG* 97: 892–93). The angel expresses the same doubts and hesitations in the sermon by James of Kokkinobaphos. In the words of his homily: “The archangel trembled when he knew the command of his Lord; he cowered when he understood the matter, and he was at a loss and in difficulty about [the accomplishment of] this thing.” Referring to the Virgin, he said to himself:

What shall I say, or how shall I speak, now that I have encountered an inexpressible marvel? With what powers of invention will I find the addresses to imperfectly arrive at praises that are fitting for you? For to find [praise] according to your worth is impossible for me. (*PG* 127: 637)

In these passages of ethopoiia we find an explanation for the troubled expression of Gabriel in the icon at Mt. Sinai, and for his unusual reluctant pose. In this most rhetorical



of Byzantine icons, the angel is expressing his fears of oratorical insufficiency. Hence in the icon as in the sermons on the Annunciation, discrete passages of description and character study have been inserted into the composition. The result is a remarkable combination of the evocation of the spiritual and of the observation of the phenomena of everyday life, or, in stylistic terms, of abstraction and realism.

## CONCLUSION

---

The compositional techniques that we have reviewed in these pages were not the exclusive preserve of writers but were employed by artists also. The question, therefore, arises of whether one medium can be said to have exerted an influence on the other, or whether the same forms occurred in literature and the visual arts as parallel expressions of common habits of thought. To put the problem another way, were the artists in some sense illustrating the texts of the hymns and homilies when they used their rhetorical methods, or were the techniques so embedded in Byzantine culture that artists were using them independently of the texts? The question does not admit of a simple answer. While such habits as repetition, variation, comparing, and contrasting were undoubtedly deeply ingrained in the common mentality, there were also occasions when a particular work of art seems to have been quoting a specific text or textual tradition. A case in point is the troubled expression and hesitant posture of Gabriel in the Sinai icon, both of which were highly unusual, and which are hard to explain unless they were a response to the incorporation of the angel's *ethopoia* into Byzantine sermons on the Annunciation.

Another factor to consider is the long time lag that sometimes occurred between the initial composition of the texts and the appearance of their counterparts in art, a topic that merits further inquiry. Taking the troubled angel again as an example, we saw that the sermon by Andrew of Crete that introduced this theme was composed in the late seventh or eighth century, whereas it was not until the late twelfth century that it was illustrated in art. Clearly, we cannot speak here of literature and art as being simultaneous expressions of a common culture, because the related phenomena belonged to different time periods in literature and in art. In this case it is necessary to find reasons why artists at the end of the twelfth century should have taken a sudden interest in a literary tradition that was already around 500 years old. It is possible that an explanation for this and for similar cases of delayed response by Byzantine artists to literary texts may be sought in a new desire for experimentation and the depiction of physical realia and psychological states that took hold of Byzantine culture at the end of the twelfth century, and which can be observed in other works of both art and literature created at this time (Parani 2003, 252–53; Maguire 2012). Some of these experiments, such as the portrayal of Gabriel's anxiety, proved to be short-lived, since they overstepped the boundaries of decorum in Byzantine art, even while they were acceptable in literature.

In conclusion, we have seen that both in the Early and in the later Byzantine periods there were clear parallels between the ways that literary and visual compositions were structured. These parallels involved both fundamental principles of design and organization, and also more isolated instances of quotation.

## REFERENCES

- Basile, G. 1993. *Giotto, the Arena Chapel Frescoes* (London).
- Beneker, J., and C. Gibson. 2016. *The Rhetorical Exercises of Nikephoros Basilakes: Progymnasmata from Twelfth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge and London).
- Byzantium, 330–1453.
- Caplan, H., trans. 1954. *Ad C. Herennium de ratione dicendi* 1 (Cambridge).
- Cormack, R. 1985. *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London).
- Deichmann, F. W. 1974. *Ravenna, Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes* 2, 1 (Wiesbaden).
- Deichmann, F. W. 1976. *Ravenna, Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes* 2, 2. (Wiesbaden).
- Deliyannis, D. M. 2010. *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (New York).
- Drpić, I. 2016. *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Later Byzantium* (Cambridge).
- Eastmond, A., ed. 2015. *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World* (New York).
- Foerster, R. 1915. *Libanii opera* 8 (Leipzig).
- Jeffreys, E., ed. 2003. *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot).
- Kazhdan, A., and H. Maguire. 1991. "Byzantine Hagiographical Texts as Sources on Art." *DOP* 45: 1–22.
- Maas, P., and C. A. Trypanis. 1963. *Sancti Romani melodi cantica: Cantica genuina* (Oxford).
- Maguire, E. D., H. Maguire, and M. J. Duncan-Flowers. 1989. *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana and Chicago).
- Maguire, H. 1981. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Maguire, H. 1983. "The Self-Conscious Angel: Character Study in Byzantine Paintings of the Annunciation." In *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on His Sixtieth Birthday by His Colleagues and Students* (Harvard Ukrainian Studies 7), edited by C. Mango and O. Pritsak, 377–92 (Cambridge, MA).
- Maguire, H. 1988. "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium." *AB* 70, 1: 88–103.
- Maguire, H. 1996. *Image and Imagination: The Byzantine Epigram as Evidence for Viewer Response* (Toronto).
- Maguire, H. 2003. "Byzantine Rhetoric, Latin Drama and the Portrayal of the New Testament." In *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, edited by E. Jeffreys, 215–33 (Aldershot).
- Maguire, H. 2007. "Eufrasius and Friends: On Names and Their Absence in Byzantine Art." In *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, edited by L. James, 139–60 (New York).
- Maguire, H. 2012. "<Pangs of Labor without Pain>: Observations on the Iconography of the Nativity in Byzantium." In *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, edited by D. Sullivan, E. Fisher, and S. Papaioannou, 205–16 (Leiden and Boston).
- Papalexandrou, A. 2007. "Echoes of Orality in the Monumental Inscriptions of Byzantium." In *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, edited by L. James, 161–87 (New York).
- Parani, M. G. 2003. *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden and Boston).

- Peltomaa, L. M. 2001. *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden and Boston).  
PG.
- Pignani, A. 1971. "Un etopea inedita di Niceforo Basilace." *Bolletino del Comitato per la preparazione dell'edizione nazionale dei classici greci e latini* n.s. 19: 131.
- Rabe, H., ed. 1926. *Rhetores graeci 10, Aphthonii progymnasmata* (Leipzig).
- Roberts, M. 1989. *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY).
- Scranton, R. L. 1964. *Aesthetic Aspects of Ancient Art* (Chicago).
- Ševčenko, N. P. 1983. *The Life of St. Nicholas in Byzantine Art* (Turin).
- Terry, A., and H. Maguire. 2007. *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA).
- Vavřínek, V., P. Odorico, and V. Drbal. 2011. *Ekphrasis: La représentation des monuments dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves. Réalités et imaginaires* (*Byzantinoslavica* 69, 3 supplementum) (Prague).
- Weitzmann, K. 1965. "Eine spätkommenische Verkündigungssikone des Sinai und die zweite byzantinische Welle des 12. Jahrhunderts." In *Festschrift für Herbert von Einem*, edited by G. von der Osten and G. Kauffmann, 299–312 (Berlin).

PART TWO

---

RECEPTION OF  
BYZANTINE ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE



.....  
*Neighbors to the East and South*  
.....



## CHAPTER 12

---

# ARMENIA

---

CHRISTINA MARANCI

## INTRODUCTION

---

HISTORIC Armenia (including the present-day Armenian Republic and territories in eastern Anatolia, southern Georgia, northwest Iran, and Azerbaijan) and the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia (1199–1375, southwestern Anatolia) held close relations with neighboring powers throughout the medieval era. Scholars, and most prominently Sirarpie Der Nersessian, have long studied the presence of Byzantine ideas in Armenian art and architecture (Der Nersessian 1945). The early medieval period, the “Age of the Kingdoms” (ninth to eleventh centuries), and twelfth- to fourteenth-century Cilicia demonstrate strong evidence for contact and familiarity with Byzantine culture. An examination of select cases demonstrates the diverse and dynamic nature of such appropriations, reflecting the complex and changing nature of political, social, religious, and cultural relations between empire and locality.

## THE SEVENTH CENTURY

---

After the collapse of the Arsacid royal dynasty in the fifth century, and before the emergence of the Bagratid kingdom in the 880s, Armenia was controlled by a constellation of princely houses. These clans lived in fortified strongholds with hunting preserves, elected their own bishops, constructed churches, and raised cavalry. Scholars argue that this localization of political power is also reflected in the general scarcity of large urban centers known from early medieval Armenia (Garsoïan 1984–1985).

The sixth and seventh centuries also saw the expansion of Byzantine control into Armenia. In 591, the emperor Maurice extended the frontier eastward into Persarmenia, and the territory became the theater of escalating confrontations between Byzantines and Persians, and, by 640, one of the earliest targets of the Arab conquests. Both the



emperors Heraclius (r. 610–641) and Constans II (r. 641–668) sought to impose Byzantine, or Chalcedonian Christianity in the region. Named for the site of the church council of 451, this denomination professed that Christ’s human and divine natures (*dyophysite*) subsisted in Christ as two natures in union. Armenians rejected this creed in 506, instead holding that Christ’s humanity and divinity resided as one nature (*miaphysite*) in Christ. The difference of formulae caused a major schism between the Armenian and Byzantine churches, and also informed their political and military relations.

The seventh century witnessed intense building activity in the South Caucasus. The sheer number, variety, and refinement of standing monuments speak to an extraordinary moment of medieval cultural production (Khatchatrian 1971; Plontke-Lüning 2007; Donabédian 2008; Kazaryan 2012; Maranci 2015a). Linked to the building traditions of inland of Asia Minor, particularly Syria and Cappadocia, the churches also attest to the development of local architectural, visual, and ritual practices. Well over a hundred are thought to date from seventh-century Armenia and Georgia, forming a corpus more robust than any other in the contemporary Mediterranean area (see Skhirtladze chapter, this volume). Domed churches with centralized plans emerged as early as the 590s and were developed and refined in the following decades. Plans show astonishing variety, including domed basilicas, hall churches, triconchs, hexaconchs, octoconchs, and cruciform churches. Constructed using the traditional rubble masonry method, the seventh-century monuments are distinctive for their geometrical massing and strong centralized forms. They also preserve epigraphy and sculptural decoration, much of it on the exterior walls. Foundation inscriptions demonstrate the importance of the nobility as patrons, and offer valuable historical information about relations among local elites and neighboring Byzantine, Persian, and Arab Umayyad powers (Greenwood 2004).

Two churches, Mren and Zvart’nots, demonstrate strong connections with the Byzantine Empire. Located on a plateau next to the Arpaçay in northeast Turkey, the church of Mren was finished between 637/8 and 640. Measuring some thirty meters in length, it is one of the largest domed basilicas of the seventh-century South Caucasus. Despite the recent collapse of the south façade, the monument makes a powerful visual impression. Strong cross arms rise from each axis of the rectangular mass, below the tall drum and hemispherical roof. Inside the church, four profiled piers connect and articulate axial barrel vaults, and rise high in the central bay to the dome with its four corner squinches. The conch and lateral walls of the apse preserve fragments of a painted program featuring a standing Christ above a row of apostles (Maranci 2013–2014).

Mren is well known for its exterior epigraphy and relief sculpture. An inscription on the west façade situates the date of construction within a synchronism naming the “victorious” emperor Heraclius, a “Prince of Armenia and Syria,” the bishop Theophilus (T’ēop’ighos), and the local lord Nerseh Kamsarakan. This group demonstrates a set of relationships: it is notable that Heraclius, in his efforts to gain Armenian allegiance, named the local Dawit’ Saharuni “Prince of Armenia and Syria” during the latter 630s; Theophilus, on the other hand, is the clan bishop of the princely family of the Kamsarakan (Greenwood 2004; Maranci 2015a, 40–45).

The north portal lintel displays a series of sculpted forms, including a large prancing horse, two crouching figures holding a long-handled cross, a cleric swinging a censer, and a large tree (Figure 12.1). Scholars have proposed that the relief represents the triumphant return of the Cross to Jerusalem by Heraclius in 630, following its Persian captivity (Thierry 1997). The two human figures holding the cross have been identified as Heraclius and Modestus, *locum tenens* of Jerusalem, who received the relic from the emperor. Such a representation of the emperor, who is shown dismounted and in plain dress, is unattested in Byzantine art, but finds parallels in early medieval Latin texts of the Return of the Cross (Maranci 2009). It also illustrates the reach of Heraclian ideology in the Caucasus. Heraclius enjoyed a favorable reception in Armenia, as seventh-century epigraphy and chronicles suggest. On the Mren inscription itself, he is named “victorious king” and in Armenian textual tradition, following the Byzantine, he is given the Christ-like epithet “Savior” (Greenwood 2004, 46).

Mren boasts an impressive program of frescoes in its sanctuary, which, recent discoveries suggest, not only constitutes the most extensive early medieval wall painting program in Armenia, but also testifies to the continuity of Byzantine painting traditions known from the sixth century (Maranci 2013–2014). The program includes a standing Christ, apostles named by inscriptions, and additional sacred figures that extend onto the eastern piers and northern walls. In the arch facing the nave interior is a large fragmentary painted inscription in Classical Armenian; interestingly, the same text appears,



FIGURE 12.1. The church of Mren, ca. 638–640, north façade portal (Kars region, modern eastern Turkey). Photo: Christina Maranci.

in Greek, at the church of the Dormition in Nicaea, dated to before the 720s (Maranci 2015–2016).

Shortly after the church of Mren was completed, work began on the patriarchal complex of Zvart'nots' near Vagharshapat (modern Ēchmiadzin, Republic of Armenia). Contemporary sources attribute its construction to the Armenian patriarch Nersēs III (ca. 641–661). Today the church is in ruins, destroyed in an earthquake of the late tenth or early eleventh century. Yet excavations beginning in the early twentieth century revealed a large round church that communicated with a residence to the south through a columnar portico (Maranci 2015b). The church rises from an expansive and tall stone platform, which forms a paved walkway. The perimeter wall, elevated three steps higher on a round stylobate, is a polygon of thirty-two sides. Its five portals open onto a circular ambulatory, screened from the domed naos by columned *exedrae* at the west, north and south. Between these curvatures stand four massive piers fronted by single columns. Although no exact precedent survives for Zvart'nots', the plan fuses a set of prototypes recognizable from neighboring regions. Fifth- and sixth-century monuments of Syria and Mesopotamia, such as the church of Apamea, also feature double-shell layouts with inner tetraconchs (Kleinbauer 1972). The enclosing rotunda form of Zvart'nots', however, is surely to be associated with the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (Maranci 2015a).

The sculpture of the capitals suggests cultural knowledge of the Byzantine Empire. On each of the four dome piers perches a single sculpted eagle with massive outstretched wings, facing out toward the ambulatory. Atop the *exedrae* columns are Ionic basket capitals bearing two Greek monograms of the patron. Two types of cross monograms occur: one of the word “Narsou” (of Nersēs) and the other of “Katholikou” (of the catholicos). That Greek appears at Zvart'nots' is significant. By the middle of the seventh century, Armenian had become the standard epigraphic language in the region. The monogrammed capitals (and a brief Greek foundation inscription) may well illustrate the adherence of Nersēs to Byzantine Chalcedonian rather than Armenian miaphysite orthodoxy, a position that caused dissent among at least some of the local clergy.

The combination of the eagle and cross monogram imagery may also derive from a Byzantine milieu: lead seals from sixth- and seventh-century Constantinople offer a particularly compelling iconographic parallel to the Zvart'nots' capitals (Maranci 2015a, 156–66). Mostly owned by consuls for authenticating documents, these circular seals feature cross monograms on their obverse and eagles with extended wings on the reverse (see Zacos 1972, nos. 490–546). Contemporary chronicles record the receipt of insignia by Armenian noble clients from Byzantine emperors, including Constans II (Thomson 1999, 183, 257, 283).

These examples offer only a sampling of evidence for Byzantine material culture in seventh-century Armenia (see also Garsoïan, Mathews, and Thomson 1982). Also noteworthy are two early Byzantine carved ivory plaques, now covering the Ēchmiadzin Gospels (Matenadaran MS 2374), featuring Christ enthroned and the Virgin and Child, surrounded by scenes. We do not know when these plaques came to serve as covers

for the manuscript; perhaps they were among the diplomatic gifts given to local elites, as described in medieval Armenian texts. Byzantine coins are known from seventh-century Armenia, such as those unearthed at the patriarchal complex of Duin, which include two hexagrams of Heraclius struck in Constantinople between 638 and 641 (Durand, Rapti, and Giovannoni 2007, 102).

Material culture formed only one point of intersection between Armenians and Byzantines. Also noteworthy are shared concerns about the potential risks of image worship, which led in Byzantium to the period of Iconoclasm and to the development of a sophisticated theory of images (see Brubaker chapter, this volume). Early medieval Armenia, too, offers a rich textual tradition addressing the validity and function of holy images. Often responding to specific episodes of image destruction, they offer a vivid sense of contemporary attitudes toward images. Unlike in Byzantium, iconoclasm in Armenia seems to have been a grass-roots affair, sporadically carried out by individual clerics beginning in the seventh century.

The central Armenian treatise on the subject is a text entitled *Concerning the Iconoclasts* (Yaghags Patkeramartic'), attributed to Vrt'anēs K'ert'ogh, who served as locum tenens patriarch of Armenia in the first quarter of the seventh century. If we agree with the authorship, this is the earliest preserved Christian defense of images, predating Leontius of Cyprus and John of Damascus (Der Nersessian 1946; Schmidt 1997; Mathews 2008–2009). It is an extraordinary text: the author offers an extended argument (against an unnamed opponent) with ample citations from biblical and historical sources. It includes a remarkably early discussion of the imprint of Christ's face given to King Abgar (Mathews 2008–2009, 113–15). Most striking, however, is the insistence throughout on the material nature of images as part of God's creation. The author stresses that "script is ink and images are materials," enumerating dyes, ivory-covered manuscripts, purple parchment, lake, and the ingredients of pigments, including ultramarine, eggs, arsenic, and plaster. This fascinating departure from Byzantine icon defenses (Mathews 2008–2009) may reflect Vrt'anēs' role as keeper of the patriarchal treasury, as reported in a tenth-century history.

## THE AGE OF THE KINGDOMS

---

In the mid-ninth century, the Byzantines and Arabs resumed war, and Armenia's strategic position as a buffer state precipitated the establishment of the Bagratid kingdom. In 885, Baghdad recognized Ashot Bagratuni as king; a year later, Constantinople did the same. The southern part of Armenian territory became the kingdom of the Artsrunik'. In 908, Gagik Artsruni, grandson of Bagratuni, established the independent principality of Vaspurakan; by his death in 936 or 943, he also claimed the title "king of Armenia." Further rivalries within the Bagratid family led to the creation of the smaller kingdoms of Taron, Siwnik', Kars, and Tashir-Dzoraget.

This period witnessed a surge in the production of art and architecture, demonstrated clearly at the royal Bagratid capital of Ani in northeast Turkey. The city's cathedral was founded by King Smbat (r. 977–989) in 989 and finished in 1001 by Queen Katramidē, his sister-in-law and the wife of his brother King Gagik (r. 989–1020). Built by the architect Trdat, Ani Cathedral is the largest church of the city, and broad for its length (some 22 × 35 meters). The dome, now collapsed, rested on four freestanding, profiled piers, which mark out three aisles and nine bays. The apse is inscribed within the eastern façade, flanked by side chambers. Single doors provide access to the south, north, and west façades. The eastern apse is elevated and accessed by lateral stairways; ten shallow niches are carved into the curvature of the wall. Stairways embedded in the apsidal and the west walls allow access to upper-story chambers.

While based in form on the church of Mren, Ani Cathedral nevertheless exhibits important design innovations (Figure 12.2). Façades rising from a stepped stylobate are covered with blind arcades formed by slender colonnettes that join in semicircular arches at the height of the springing of the barrel vault. The interior too shows new features, including an unprecedented enlargement of the central nave. The narrow side aisles remain very tall, creating a sense of attenuated space. The piers at Ani are more profiled than at Mren, less monolithic; they resemble bundles of slender shafts rising into pointed arches. Pendentives in the dome highlight this soaring sense; at Mren, by contrast, semicircular squinches hood each corner of the domed bay.

The eleventh-century *Universal History of Step'anos Tarōnets'i* relates that the architect Trdat worked not only on Armenian monuments, but also on Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Maranci 2003). This text is precious because it gives a sense of the reputation of Armenian builders and buildings abroad; it also invites us to consider how work experience at Hagia Sophia shaped Trdat's subsequent methods, practices, and aesthetics. It may be that the domed bays of both Ani Cathedral and the nearby palace chapel of Gagik, both occupying much more space than in their seventh-century prototypes, reflect Trdat's experience repairing the church in the Byzantine capital.

Manuscript painting of the Age of the Kingdoms also demonstrates knowledge of Byzantine tradition. This is apparent in the magnificent if mutilated manuscript known as the Gospels of King Gagik of Kars (Jerusalem MS 2556). Scholars have debated the circumstances of its production, but generally agree on a date in the eleventh century. The manuscript was a deluxe commission, giant in size (ca. 52 × 40 cm) and extraordinarily copious and refined in its illuminations. The scene of Christ and the Rich Young Man makes clear the quality of the painting (fol. 330). Christ is graceful and monumental, the volume of his body conveyed through gentle and assured modulations of tone. Drapery folds, formed from several graduations of color, define limbs underneath. This image suggests a careful and elegant painter familiar with Byzantine painting (Jones 2007, 109–10). If Gagik-Abas of Kars (d. 1080) was indeed the patron of this manuscript, the style of the painting would correspond nicely to his attested Hellenophilia: he had planned an academy of Classical Greek literature



**FIGURE 12.2.** The Cathedral of Ani, 989–1001, interior to east (Kars region, modern eastern Turkey). Photo: Christina Maranci.

at Kars (Mathews and Wieck 1994, 61–62). Whether or not we can make the attribution, the strongly Byzantinizing painting style of the Gospels finds parallels in many other Armenian manuscripts of this period, such as the Trebizond Gospels (Venice San Lazzaro MS 1400/108) and the Adrianople Gospels (Venice San Lazzaro MS 887/116). The latter, written in 1007, reflects the presence of an Armenian community in the western part of the Byzantine Empire in Adrianople, in Thrace. Its donor pages

(folios 7v–8r) feature a portrait of Yovhannēs, the protospatharios of Basil II (r. 976–1025), wearing Byzantine military gear. He presents his book to the Virgin and Child, identified in both Greek and Armenian (Evans 1997a, 357–58).

## THE KINGDOM OF CILICIA

---

Even after the Seljuk defeat of the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, the art and architecture of Armenia continued to demonstrate contacts with imperial culture. This is particularly apparent during the period of Georgian rule (ca. 1200–1236). The church of Tigran Honents' at Ani (ca. 1215), for example, features a program of wall painting remarkable both for its abundance and its Byzantinizing imagery, accompanied by inscriptions in Georgian and Greek, as well as Armenian.

More direct contact with the Byzantine Empire, however, is demonstrated in Armenian Cilicia. Prior to Armenian rule, the region was controlled successively by Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, and Abbasid powers until its Byzantine reconquest in 962–965. Armenian presence in the region grew in the tenth century with the westward migrations from Greater Armenia, particularly after 1071. At this time, two Armenian families emerged as leading local powers: the Ārubenids, located in the anti-Taurus range, and the Het'umids, settled at the Cilician Gates. Navigating the conflicting interests and aggressions of the Byzantines, Seljuks, the nearby Crusader states, emerging Ayyubid power in Egypt, as well as the internally divided Armenian princely houses, the Ārupenid prince Lewon II was recognized as king in 1198, accepting crowns from both the Byzantine emperor Alexios III Angelos and, in 1199, from the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV. Lewon (thereafter Lewon I, "the Magnificent") established his royal capital at Sis, located in the foothills of the Anti-Taurus mountains.

The location of Cilicia meant close engagement with many cultures, including Byzantium. This is evident in a range of media, from the early Byzantine spolia incorporated into the church of king T'oros at Anavarza (Edwards 1982, 157), to the Byzantinizing features of the reliquary of Skewra (Der Nersessian 1964). The most conspicuous Byzantine ideas appear in Cilician manuscript painting of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, particularly in the realm of royal portraiture. One of the most sumptuous images of this type appears in the Gospels of Queen Keran of 1272, showing the royal couple Lewon and Keran along with their children (Figure 12.3/Color Plate 6A) (Jerusalem 2563, fol. 380). This full-page image, located at the end of the manuscript, bears on its upper half a large enthroned Christ, clad in white and surrounded by a striped blue mandorla. He is flanked by the Virgin and the hair-shirted John the Baptist, and extends both hands, blessing simultaneously both king and queen, who kneel at the bottom corners of the page. Between them are their three sons and two daughters. The composition is carefully balanced between the divine zone above and the royal family below, thus emphasizing simultaneously the authority and piety of the Cilician kings (Der Nersessian, 1993, 156–57). Much of this image, moreover, uses Byzantine conventions



FIGURE 12.3 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 6A). Portraits of King Lewon, Queen Keran, and children, Queen Keran Gospels, 1272 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate MS 2563, fol. 380). © Courtesy of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



of power: the representation of Christ conveying authority recalls similar portraits of Byzantine emperors. The costumes of the royal family seem to underscore Byzantine connections: both Lewon and Keran wear the long-sleeved tunic adorned with the *loros*, a recognizably Byzantine imperializing costume. Their headgear—his heavily jeweled crown, her combination of jeweled helmet and *prependoulia*—also evoke, if approximately, Byzantine regalia (Evans 1997b; Rapti 2013, 312–19).

Another manuscript from the period, known as the “Gospel of the Eight Painters” (Erevan MS 7651), was copied from a known model, an eleventh-century Byzantine Gospels (Florence Laurentian Library, Plut. VI. 23). We know this in part because of striking similarities between the two manuscripts: both employ small, frieze-like images that run in episodes across the page, above and below corresponding lines of text. Proof of this relationship is offered in the Byzantine manuscript itself, which preserves a marginal note in Armenian to the copyist (Der Nersessian 1993, 169–75).

## BYZANTIUM AND BEYOND

---

Even after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, artistic relations between Armenians and Byzantine culture continued, as attested by a rich corpus of manuscripts produced in seventeenth-century Constantinople. An Armenian manuscript of 1643 (Houghton MS. Arm 11) bears the style and iconography of Late Byzantine manuscripts and icons, suggesting direct knowledge of such works. Both this manuscript and another in the Morgan Library & Museum (MS 621) preserve flyleaves made from folios of a Byzantine codex, offering a sense of the linguistic diversity and social memory of post-Byzantine Constantinople (Mathews and Wieck 1994, cat. nos. 18 and 60).

These seventeenth-century manuscripts, like the earlier works considered above, demonstrate the complex and diverse nature of Armenian-Byzantine artistic relations. The richness of such contacts leads to further questions. First, how might other Byzantine media have informed Armenian art? Could the apsidal inscription at Mren of Psalm 92/93 reflect contact with Byzantine liturgy, which features this text in its *enarxis* rite (Maranci 2015–2016)? Was Trdat’s emphasis on large domical bays intended to capture something of the astonishing acoustical, as well as spatial, experience of Constantinople’s Hagia Sophia? Second, what can one say of the presence of Armenian ideas in Byzantine art? The closeness of Armenian and Byzantine relations in the seventh century, and during the Macedonian and Komnenian eras, allows a sustained and specific examination of the problem. For example, scholars have explored Armenia’s role in the development of Middle Byzantine architecture. This question has a rich history, beginning with Josef Strzygowski’s theory of a “migration” of Armenian plans to the Mediterranean and farther west (Strzygowski 1918). Responses to that initial proposal have been various and sometime heated, although most recent critics have noted, on the one hand, the methodological problems with such a “diffusion” theory and, on the other hand, the existence of some striking visual parallels between the two

traditions. Yet the very question presupposes stable, recognizable, and self-contained categories of Byzantine and Armenian art: a conceptualization that is, if convenient, insufficiently agile to capture the dynamic relations between empire and locality during a period spanning over a millennium.

## REFERENCES

- Der Nersessian, S. 1945. *Armenia and the Byzantine Empire: A Brief Study of Armenian Art and Civilization* (Cambridge).
- Der Nersessian, S. 1946. "Image Worship in Armenia and Its Opponents." *Armenian Quarterly* 1: 67–81. Reprinted in *Études byzantines et arméniennes/Byzantine and Armenian Studies* (Louvain, 1973): 405–15.
- Der Nersessian, S. 1964. "Le Reliquaire de Skevra et l'orfèvrerie cilicienne aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles." *Revue des études arméniennes* n.s. 1: 124–47; reprinted in *Études byzantines et arméniennes/Byzantine and Armenian Studies* (Louvain 1973), 705–21.
- Der Nersessian, S. 1993. *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to Fourteenth Century*. 2 vols. (Washington, DC).
- Donabédian, P. 2008. *L'âge d'or de l'architecture arménienne: VIIIe siècle* (Marseille).
- Evans, H. 1997a. "The Armenians." In *Glory of Byzantium*, 351–63.
- Evans, H. 1997b. "Kings and Power Bases: Sources for Royal Portraits in Armenian Cilicia." In *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*. Edited by J.-P. Mahé and R. W. Thomson, 485–507 (Atlanta).
- Durand, J., I. Rapti, and D. Giovannoni, eds. 2007. *Armenia Sacra. Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniennes (IVe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris).
- Edwards, R. 1982. "Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia," *DOP* (36): 155–76.
- Garsoïan, N. G. 1984–1985. "The Early-Mediaeval Armenian City: An Alien Element?" *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 16–17: 67–83 (reprinted in Garsoïan, *Church and Culture in Early Medieval Armenia* (Aldershot 1999)).
- Garsoïan, N. G., T. F. Mathews, and R. W. Thomson, eds. 1982. *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, DC).
- Greenwood, T. 2004. "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions." *DOP* 58: 27–91.
- Jones, L. 2007. *Between Byzantium and Islam: Aghtamar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership* (London).
- Kazaryan, A. 2012. *Tserkovnaia arkhitektura stran zakavkaz'ia VII veka [Church Architecture of the Countries of Seventh-Century Transcaucasia]* (Moscow).
- Khatchatrian, A. 1971. *L'architecture arménienne du IVe de VIe siècle* (Paris).
- Kleinbauer, W. E. 1972. "Zvart'nots and the Origins of Christian Architecture in Armenia." *AB* 54 (3): 245–62.
- Maranci, C. 2003. "The Architect Trdat: Building Practices and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Byzantium and Armenia." *JSAH* 62, 3: 294–305.
- Maranci, C. 2009. "The Humble Heraclius: Revisiting the North Portal at Mren." *Revue des études arméniennes* 31: 359–72.
- Maranci, C. 2013–2014. "New Observations on the Frescoes at Mren." *Revue des études arméniennes* 35: 203–25.
- Maranci, C. 2015a. *Vigilant Powers: Three Churches of Early Medieval Armenia* (Turnhout).

- Maranci, C. 2015b. "The Archaeology and Reconstruction Theories of Zuart'noc," *DOP* 68: 69–115.
- Maranci, C. 2015–2016. "Holiness Befits Your House' (Ps. 92 [93]: 5): A Preliminary Report on the Apse Inscription at Mren." *Revue des études arméniennes* 36: 243–63.
- Mathews, T. F. 2008–2009. "Vrt'anès K'ert'oł and the Early Theology of Images." *Revue des études arméniennes* 31: 101–26.
- Mathews, T. F., and R. S. Wieck, eds. 1994. *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts* (New York).
- Plontke-Lüning, A. 2007. *Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien: Die Entwicklung des christlichen Sakralbaus in Lazika, Iberien, Armenien, Albanien und den Grenzregionen vom 4. bis zum 7. Jh.* (Vienna).
- Rapti, I. 2013. "Featuring the King: Rituals of Coronation and Burial in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia." In *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*, edited by A. Beihammer, S. Constantinou, and M. Parani, 291–335 (Leiden).
- Schmidt, A. B. 1997. "Gab es ein armenischen Ikonoklasmus?: Rekonstruktion eines Documents der kaukasisch-albanischen Theologiegeschichte." In *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794: Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur*, edited by R. Berndt, vol. 2, 947–64 (Mainz).
- Strzygowski, J. 1918. *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*. 2 vols. (Vienna).
- Thierry, N. 1997. "Héraclius et la Vraie Croix en Arménie." In *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, edited by J.-P. Mahé and R. W. Thomson, 165–86 (Atlanta).
- Thomson, R. W. 1999. *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*. Notes by R. W. Thomson and historical commentary by J. Howard-Johnson (Liverpool).
- Zacos, G. 1972. *Byzantine Lead Seals*. Edited by J. Nesbitt. 2 vols. (Berne).

## CHAPTER 13

---

# GEORGIA

---

ZAZA SKHIRTLADZE

## INTRODUCTION

---

THE adoption and official declaration of Christianity in Georgia in the 320s resulted in considerable changes in all principal spheres of life, determining further political and cultural orientation of the country. Soon after the conversion, a close relationship was established between the ruling circles of Georgia and Byzantium. Historical sources tell about the envoy sent by Constantine the Great to Georgia, with ecclesiastics, masons, and holy relics, the nails and the beam to which Christ's feet were nailed. These were deposited in different parts of the newly Christianized kingdom, evidence of the orientation toward Byzantium manifested by the local state and church.

## THE EARLY PERIOD

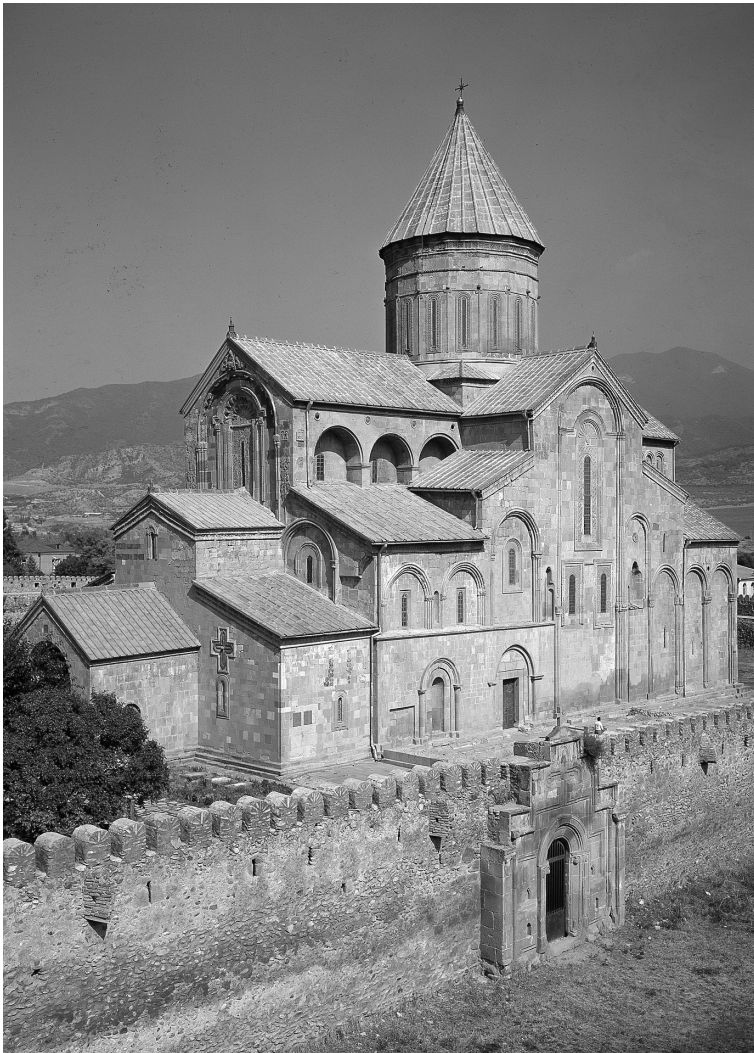
---

The changes that took place in Georgia in the early fourth century were most explicitly reflected in art, as existing traditions had to adapt to the establishment and expansion of Christianity. Much time had to pass before a common artistic language perfected, through which the key message of the Orthodox faith could be articulated. What is common to all the monuments of art from the fourth to the tenth centuries is a tendency to achieve as much consonance with general Christian values as possible. At the same time, links to local origins are no less manifest. This synthesis resulted in art distinguished by a unique originality.

Since the mid-fifth century, the attitude of the Georgian Church to the Orthodox Creed was gradually outlined, determining further intensification of the ties between Byzantium and Georgia. At the same time, early medieval Georgia kept especially close relations with the Holy Land. The first Christian church in the capital of the country, Mtskheta, was built in the place where, according to the legend, a *chiton* of Christ was

buried. The church was originally called the Holy of Holiness and later on The Great Sion (Figure 13.1). Along with the use of Jerusalemite liturgical practice, there was an attempt to copy the topography of the Holy Land through the use of toponyms in the sanctuaries of Mtskheta, providing more evidence of a relationship with the Holy Land.

By the later sixth-early seventh century, Georgia had fully adopted Orthodoxy. By that time, ecclesiastic building activity had spread to every part of the country. Georgian historical sources have preserved information on many of them: the Mtskheta upper church and the Episcopal See (the latter built in the reign of the king Mirian in the first half of the fourth century); the Tsilkani church (erected by king Bakar, son of Mirian,



**FIGURE 13.1.** Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, fourth century, rebuilt at the turn of fifth–sixth centuries and in the first third of the eleventh century. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze.

in the mid-fourth century); Erusheti and Manglisi (founded by the bishop John sent by Constantine the Great and finished by king Mirdat in the second half of the fourth century); churches at Nikozi, Ujarma, Bichvinta (fifth century); Episcopal Sees of Mere, Shindobani, and Akhiza (erected by Artavazd, the relative of the king Vakhtang Gorgasali in the late fifth century); and several others.

As in Byzantium, both basilicas and domed churches existed from the earliest times in Christian Georgia. While the structures match norms established in the Byzantine church, their construction and artistic qualities stand out for their individuality. Furthermore, the basilica, popular in the Christian East, displays variations marked with special features in Georgia.

This is testified to by the coexistence of traditional three-nave basilicas (Zegani, fourth–fifth century), Urbnisi and Anchiskhati (late fifth–early sixth century), Nekresi (sixth–seventh century), as well as three-nave structures covered by a gable roof (Ertso Zion and Bolnisi Zion, fifth century). Simultaneously there are variations in which the naves—each with a chancel and altar—are separated from each other by walls (Sabue, sixth century; Ruispiri, Nekresi, and Cheremi, all of the sixth–seventh century; Vachnadziani, seventh century; Kondoli, eighth century; Q’vareli, eighth–ninth century) (Mepisachvili and Tsintsadze 1977; Alpagò-Novello et. al 1980; Beridzse and Neubauer 1981).

Especially noteworthy is the case of the cruciform-domed church, which became the leading type in local ecclesiastical architecture in the second half of the sixth century. Gradual refinement of one of its variations, namely a *tetraconch* which began with the church of Gavazi (early sixth century), resulted in the erection of the church of the Holy Cross in Mtskheta (586/87–604/5). It is built on the place where a cross was erected in the first days of the conversion of Kartli. The relief images of Patrikios Stephanos I, Hypatos Demetre, and Hypatos Adarnerse, donors of the church, and the representatives of the ruling house of Kartli/Iberia (eastern Georgia) are presented on the eastern façade of the church, above the windows. The whole gallery of representatives of the ruling family must have been depicted on the southern façade (Aladashvili 1977).

This type became simultaneously widely spread not only in various regions of Georgia, including Ateni Sioni in Kartli, Martvili in Egrisi, Shuamta in Kakheti (all seventh century); Dranda in Apkhazeti (eighth century); Chamkhusi in Tao-Klarjeti (ninth century); but also in neighboring Armenia (see Maranci chapter, this volume). A bit later, more complicated variations developed. These include a tetraconch with circular ambulatory (Bana, seventh century); the *croix-libre* (a domed structure in which the four lateral arms form a cross) or semi-*croix-libre* (a domed structure with four lateral arms forming a cross and two subsidiary chambers, *pastophoria*, flanking the chancel in the eastern arm) (Idlei and Shiomgvime, sixth century; Samtsevrissi, first half of the seventh century); a *croix-inscrite* (a domed structure with four lateral arms forming a cross and four piers supporting the dome at the arms’ crossing) (Tsromi, 626–634); and a tetraconch inscribed in an octagon (Davitiani, fifth century) (Mepisachvili and Tsintsadze 1977).

By the mid-sixth century, the arrival of the so-called Syrian Fathers resulted in the further strengthening and widening of monasticism, reflecting the practices of the Byzantine world. Monasteries founded in different parts of east Georgia (Zedazeni, Shiomgvime, Gareja, Nekresi, and several others), distinguished by their strong ascetic nature, gradually developed into significant centers of literacy, with original examples of architecture and mural painting. These retained close links with monastic centers of the Christian East, the Holy Land, Syria, and Cappadocia.

Christian imagery is traceable through the sculptural decoration of churches and stelae in this era. The tradition of embellishing the interiors of churches with mosaics and frescoes dates from the sixth–seventh centuries (Holy Cross, Mtskheta, 586–605, and Ateni Sioni, first half of the seventh century). Until the end of the tenth century, only certain parts of the interior were covered with painted decoration, usually the chancel and the dome, while other parts were left unpainted. Both aniconic decoration, symbols, and simple decorative motives (as at Ateni Sioni), and paintings of holy images coexisted at this time, sharing the principles of Byzantine monumental art in the selection and depiction of the images and symbols (Virsaladze 1977). One of the main ideas promulgated in Georgian mural decoration is the eternal glory of the Lord as Judge and Savior. This became traditional for painting over the course of succeeding centuries (Velmans and Alpagó-Novello 1996).

Beginning in the mid-seventh century Arab domination drastically changed the situation in the country: links with the rest of the world, including Byzantium, became weaker and the process of disintegration started in the country. However, the development of Christian art in Georgia continued and the next period (second half of the seventh century to the first half of the tenth century) was the most intense and creative.

## THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (SEVENTH–TENTH CENTURIES)

---

Ecclesiastical architecture of this epoch was distinguished by both its numbers and typological diversity. During the eighth–ninth centuries, the various basilicas—single-nave, and two- or three-naved—were built, along with domed churches as in earlier times, but also variations of apsed structures such as *triconchs*, *tetraconchs*, and six-apsed structures.

At that time, the number and importance of regional schools started to rise significantly. Certain of these stand out for special features. Tao-Klarjeti in the southeastern part of the country was distinguished at that period for its scale in all spheres of creativity. Foundation of numerous monasteries by the efforts of St. Grigol Khantzteli (759–861) and his disciples marked a new stage in monastic building activity, differing in character and scale from the early monasticism based on Syro-Palestinian traditions (Nuka

Saq'dari, Vachedzori, Opisa, all of the turn of eighth–ninth century), and Khandzta (ninth century). All these are complexes with a less ascetic nature; they display regular planning and include all units necessary for a monastic community: main church and small chapels, refectory and economy buildings, cells and burials, etc. The architectural physiognomy of these structures became more elaborated, decorated not only with reliefs, but also with frescoes. Peculiar features are characteristic for the schools of Kakheti (Gurjaani, eighth century; Vachnadziani, ninth century); Javakheti (Kizil-Deresi, eighth century; Buzaveti, Khvilisha, ninth century; Tamala, tenth century); and Apkhazeti (Miusera, eighth–ninth century; Bzipi, ninth century; and Mokvi Cathedral, tenth century). For example, the Gurjaani church is a three-nave basilica with two small domes erected over the central nave along the axis, and additional galleries above the lateral naves along with a two-story western porch. Local geographical unities (such as Ksani gorge) display individual artistic peculiarities in their forms, as well as in the façades and interiors reflecting local building materials (Kabeni, Tsirkoli, eighth century; and Armazi, 864).

In the eighth through the ninth centuries, secular construction began to be significant, although often related to the church, as many important examples were episcopal palaces. A number of these are still preserved in Kakheti; examples in Nekresi and Cheremi originated in that period.

Georgia was among those parts of the Eastern Christendom that were not affected by the Iconoclastic Controversy. Thus, an uninterrupted development of the Christian figurative tradition, along with iconographical themes and images, was preserved unaltered up to the Late Middle Ages. In eighth- to ninth-century Georgia, murals were still executed on interiors and façades of churches (Sheviakova 1983); *stelae* and chancel barriers were decorated with reliefs; and painted and metal icons as well as *cloisonné* enamels were produced. *Vitae* of local saints were created, resulting in the establishment of new iconography and cycles.

And while Georgian art had never developed in isolation, certain specific traits from the earliest period became more pronounced from the eighth–ninth centuries onward. In both painting and sculpture, expressiveness came to the fore, manifested through accentuating individual details of an image. This can be seen in murals (Telovani eighth–ninth century; four paintings of the ninth–tenth century in Sabereebi); in goldsmithry (icon of Transfiguration from Zarzma, 886) (Chubinashvili 1959) and sculptural decoration of the church façades (Opiza, early ninth century); chancel barriers (Gveldesi, eighth century); *stelae* (Usaneti, eighth century) (Aladashvili 1977); and manuscript illumination (Adishi Four Gospels, 897) (Shmerling 1979). The isolation of the country in the eighth and ninth centuries encouraged the acceleration of this process.

Also at this time, a reorientation of Georgia away from Jerusalem and toward Constantinople was developing. This included the privileged position of the rulers of some principalities of the country, especially that of Tao-Klarjeti, at the Byzantine imperial court in the second half of the tenth century. At the beginning of the eleventh century, there were several intermarriages between the Georgian and Byzantine



royal families. The founding of an important Georgian monastic center on Mt. Athos, Ivērōn, and an intensification of translation activity by the great Athonite fathers—Sts John, Euthymios, and George the Hagiorites—as well as in the Holy Land, highlight the Georgians' role in the common Orthodox *oecumene*. This relationship is clearly reflected in all spheres of creative life, including translated and original literature, manuscript production, architecture, painting, and metalwork. Several monasteries (particularly in Tao-Klarjeti) founded through the efforts of the local Church, royal court, and aristocracy set themselves up as major spiritual centers. This wave of monastery building in the tenth century, especially in areas bordering Byzantium, such as Oshki Laura, Khakhuli, Parkhali, and Otkhta Eklesia, were conceived as centers enhancing the development of Byzantine spiritual culture (Beridze 1981; Djobadze 1992). Activities of local rulers were supported by the clergy who were descended from noble families. Monuments of architecture, wall painting, book illumination, and metalwork, created in the tenth and eleventh centuries by royal patronage, reflect contemporary aristocratic tastes and are distinguished by extremely refined qualities. These include murals of Otkhta Eklesia (980s), Khakhuli (end of tenth century), Ishkhani (Figure 13.2) (1032), and Oshki (1036) (Virsaladze 1977).



FIGURE 13.2. Ishkhani cathedral. Composition of the Ascension of the Cross in the dome sphere, 1032. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze.

Examples of this elevated taste in other media are chancel barriers of Shiomgvime and Sapara (beginning of the eleventh century) (Shmerling 1962); metal and painted icons (Alibegashvili and Volskaia 1982); numerous enamels (Khuskivadze 1981); and richly illuminated manuscripts (Shmerling 1968; Shmerling 1979). Also significant are processional crosses at Ishkhani (973) and Breti (994–1001); panels from Sagholasheni (late tenth century); the pre-altar cross from Mestia (early eleventh century); the chalice from Bedia cathedral (executed in 999 by the commission of the king Bagrat III); the Martvili encolpion (tenth century) (Figure 13.3); an icon of the Virgin from Zarzma (early eleventh century); a chased medallion with the image of St. Mamas (eleventh century) (Chubinashvili 1959); the Jruchi first Gospel (936–940, National Centre of Manuscripts, Cod. H-1660); and the Synaxarion of Zacharia, archbishop of Bana (written and illuminated in Constantinople in 1030, National Centre of Manuscripts, Cod. A-648) (Shmerling 1979).



FIGURE 13.3. Encolpion of Martvili cathedral, tenth century. Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze.

## LATER ARTS

Developments in the Byzantine capital as well as various monasteries continue these artistic links. Representatives of Georgian noblemen who had moved from their homeland to Constantinople strove to promote Byzantine-Georgian relations. Texts, both original and translated, along with works of art bear vivid testimony to their efforts. Greek and Georgian narrative sources, documents, and scribal colophons mention Georgians at several monasteries in and around Constantinople. The Chora and St. George of the Mangana are the best known among them. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a number of newly translated treatises were copied and illuminated in these monasteries for Georgian donors by Georgian scribes. These manuscripts reflect the tastes of the city's aristocratic circles and stand out by virtue of their refined quality and high artistic merits (Shmerling 1979). They are important evidence for the growing cultural engagement of Georgia with Byzantium that continued despite political and military tensions between the two countries. Especially strong were monastic centers in Jerusalem, Athos, and Mt. Sinai; one can speak about a Sinai Georgian literary center as well as a Sinai Georgian workshop of icon painting.

Unlike in Byzantium, in Georgia the decoration of the whole interior of a church with images started only in the late tenth century (Virsaladze 1977; Velmans and Alpag-Novello 1996). The selection of images was, of course, similar to that of Byzantium in many respects. However, old iconographical themes, firmly established in local artistic tradition, still continued. These included the Ascension of the Cross by angels, or the cross in a mandorla, which replaced the Pantokrator in the dome, as well as the Christ in Majesty or *Deesis* in the apse (Alpag-Novello et. al 1980).

From that time onwards, local schools of painting developed, notably at Tao-Klarjeti, Svaneti, and Gareja. Among the murals created are both distinguished ensembles by highly qualified artisans and relatively modest frescoes by local ones. The artistic value of these latter lies in the informal and artistic characteristics linked to local traditions, rendering these no less impressive than the ones of well-trained masters. In these schools, numerous painted and metal icons were produced and manuscripts copied and illuminated as well.

Great cathedrals erected in the late tenth and early eleventh century—Kutaisi Sioni, Svetitskhoveli Cathedral of Twelve Apostles, Alaverdi Cathedral of St. George, Ishkhani Cathedral and the main church of Oskhi Lavra—are distinguished by their large scale, originality of construction and artistic solution, and the richness and diversity of the ornamental decoration (Mepisachvili and Tsintsadze 1977; Beridzse and Neubauer 1981). By the first half of the eleventh century, beginning with Samtavisi church, a variation of the cruciform-domed church with the dome supported on the outer edges of the sanctuary and two massive piers, and the system of decoration of the eastern façade with a large relief cross placed between two niches as well as an arcade along the outer walls, was fully established (Beridzse and Neubauer 1981).

Secular architecture also developed in the tenth through the thirteenth centuries. Only a few of its examples have survived; these include the twelfth-century buildings of the Gelati and Iq'alto academies and the Geguti royal palace, as well as the settlements of Rustavi, Samshvilde, and Dmanisi studied through archaeological excavation. There are also monastic ensembles with refectories, economic facilities, and so on in Uraveli, Oshki, Opiza, and Shiomgvime. Finally, arched bridges are also preserved such as Besleti in Apkhazeti, Dandalo in Adchara, and Rkoni in Kartli.

The period of the eleventh through the early thirteenth centuries saw a strengthening of the Georgian state, and the acme of the evolution and refinement of artistic traditions from previous centuries. This is clearly discernible in the decorative ensembles of Ateni Sioni (last third of the eleventh century) and the main church of the Gelati monastery (1120s); murals in churches by the royal painter Tevdore (1096–1130) (Aladashvili, Alibegashvili, and Volskaia 1983), and Michael Maglakeli (1140) in Upper Svaneti; along with miniatures of the richly illuminated Jruchi and Gelati Gospels (twelfth century). These are joined by numerous painted and chased icons, among them the Khakhuli triptych (commissioned by king Davit IV and his son, king Demetre I, in the second quarter of the twelfth century) (Khuskivadze 1984).

A contemporary intensification of artistic activities occurred in Georgian monasteries beyond the boundaries of the country. Monuments of architecture (the main church of the monastery of Holy Cross in Jerusalem), wall painting (the frescoes of painter John Ivēropoulos in the ossuary chapel of the monastery of Petritzos, founded in 1083 by Gregory Bakurianisdze in Bulgaria), icon painting (the late eleventh-century calendar hexptych of the painter John Tokhabi in St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai), and manuscript illumination (the Alaverdi Four Gospels copied and illuminated in Kalipos monastery of the Virgin near Antioch, 1054), bear witness to this trend (Shmerling 1979).

The heyday of the Georgian kingdom occurred in the years around 1200. After the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade, Georgia remained as the major Christian Orthodox country in the region, gradually becoming the leader in the area. This is especially visible in murals, where the images of the powerful royal court (including Queen Tamar and her family members) as well as the nobles play a significant part (Eastmond 1998). Vast fresco ensembles were commissioned by the court, local nobility, or clergymen, including paintings in the Vardzia church of the Dormition (1184–1186), the main church of St. John the Baptist monastery in the Gareja desert (the end of the twelfth century), the Q'intsvisi church of St. Nicholas (first years of the thirteenth century), the Betania church (a significant part executed or partially repainted at the beginning of the thirteenth century), the main church of the Bertubani monastery in the Gareja desert (the second decade of the thirteenth century), and the Akhtala cathedral (1220s). Alongside court murals are notable works of goldsmiths Beka and Beshken Opizari (such as the ornamental framing of the Anchi icon of the Saviour, 1180s), as well as the contemporary miniatures of the Labsq'aldi (Figure 13.4/Color Plate 7), Tsq'arostavi, and Largvisi Gospels; further testimony is provided by the illuminated Gospel of Vani, which was copied in Constantinople by the Scribe Ioane for Queen Tamar in ca. 1200 and illuminated by the painter Michael Koreseli. These works are marked by the highest



FIGURE 13.4 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 7). Lapsq'aldi Four Gospels, late twelfth century. Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography, Mestia. Photo: Zaza Skhirtladze.

artistic quality and refinement, revealing deep knowledge of the stylistic tendencies of late Komnenian art.

Despite continuous devastating invasions, artistic creative activity continued in the second half of the thirteenth century through efforts of the local rulers, who acted as donors. This tendency is especially visible in the Samtskhe Saatabago principedom, whose rulers, the Jaq'elis, had commissioned the construction and decoration of numerous churches, among them those of Sapara (end of the thirteenth century), Zazma (beginning of the fourteenth century), and Chule (1381). Simultaneously vast fresco ensembles were created in western Georgia, namely in Ubisi, Khobi, Sori, and Martvili. In the late fourteenth century, Manuel Eugenikos, a Constantinopolitan painter specially invited to Georgia by Vameq' Dadiani, ruler of Odishi (western Georgia), executed the Tsalenjikha murals. Georgian craftsmen also took part; local traditions are visible in different parts of the murals. And while all these ensembles reflected Palaiologan trends, murals of Upper Svaneti—in Laghami, Lashtkhveri, Svipi, and Ianash—testify that the style acquired certain peculiar local features (Virsaladze 1977).

Difficulties caused by devastating invasions and the disintegration of the country in the fifteenth century left their imprint on the character of creative activity. Still, though the once-powerful kingdom was divided into separate, often rival principedoms, spiritual life and artistic production in Georgia continued. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the monasteries of Samtskhe were the main centers of metalwork. It was there that the revetments of the wings of the Anchi triptych of the Saviour, the Atsq'uri icon of the Holy Virgin, and the Sadgeri altar cross were created (Beridze 1984; Abramishvili and Javakhishvili 1986). It is most likely that the revetment of the famous Portaitissa

icon of the Holy Virgin, executed by the commission of Southern Georgian rulers in Ivērōn monastery in the first years of the sixteenth century, was also executed by this school. Monasteries continued to be the main centers of artistic production; through the efforts of the royal court and the local nobility, they preserved contacts with the most significant spiritual centers of the Eastern Christendom. Murals, metal and painted icons, embroideries, and richly illuminated manuscripts were created, continuing the centuries-old Georgian arts expressing Christian spirituality.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

---

A greater awareness of Georgian art can be applied to future scholarship, especially in the West, to consider Georgian evidence in questions of center and periphery, issues of multiculturalism, innovation and tradition, and a consideration of style as the bearer of meaning. This information might also be particularly useful for graduate students, especially for those beginning a project. Consideration of Georgian material could be a source of methodological aspects concerning the rich Georgian cultural tradition, to reveal striking aspects not only of Georgian art, but also of medieval culture more broadly.

## REFERENCES

---

- Abramishvili, G., and A. Javakhishvili. 1986. *Jewellery and Metalwork in the Museums of Georgia* (Tbilisi).
- Aladashvili, N. 1977. *Monumental'naja skulptura Gruzii [Monumental Sculpture in Georgia]* (Moscow).
- Aladashvili, N., G. Alibegashvili, and A. Volskaia. 1983. *Zhivopisnaja shkola Svaneti [Svaneti School of Painting]* (Tbilisi).
- Alibegashvili, G., and A. Volskaia. 1982. "Georgian Icons." In *The Icon*, edited by K. Weitzmann et. al 85-129 (New York).
- Alpago-Novelo, A., et. al 1980. *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia* (Louvain-la-Neuve).
- Beridze, V. (1981). *Architecture de Tao-Klarjeti* (Tbilisi).
- Beridze, V., and E. Neubauer. 1981. *Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien vom 4. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin).
- Beridze, V., et. al 1984. *The Treasures of Georgia* (London).
- Chubinashvili, G. 1959. *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo [Georgian Metalwork]* (Tbilisi).
- Djobadze, W. 1992. *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjeti and Šavšeti* (Stuttgart).
- Eastmond, A. 1998. *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, PA).
- Khuskivadze, L. 1984. *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* (Tbilisi).
- Mepisachvili, R., and W. Tsintsadze. 1977. *Die Kunst des alten Georgien* (Leipzig).
- Sheviakova, T. 1983. *Monumentalnaia zhivopis rannego srednevekov'ya Gruzii [Monumental Painting in Early Medieval Georgia]* (Tbilisi).

- Shmerling, R. 1962. *Malye formy v arkhitekture srednevekovoj Gruzii* [*Small Forms in the Architecture of Medieval Georgia*] (Tbilisi).
- Shmerling, R. 1968, 1979. *Khudozhestvennoe oformlenie gruzinskoj rukopisnoi knigi IX–XI stoletii* [*Illumination of Georgian Manuscripts of the 9th–11th c.*], vols. I and II (Tbilisi).
- Velmans, T., and A. Alpago-Novello. 1996. *Miroir de l’invisible: Peintures murales et architecture de la Georgie (VIe–XVe s.)* (Saint-Léger-Vauban, France).
- Virsaladze, T. 1977. *Osnovnye etapy razvitija gruzinskoj srednevekovoi monumental’noi zhivopisi* [*Main Stages of the Development of Medieval Georgian Monumental Painting*] (Tbilisi).

## CHAPTER 14

---

# ISLAMIC STATES AND THE MIDDLE EAST

---

ERICA CRUIKSHANK DODD

## INTRODUCTION

---

CONSTANTINE I moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium for good reasons: barbarians were nibbling at the western front of the empire, whereas the eastern borders were strongly fortified, relatively secure, and offered opportunity for trade with the east (Thomas 2012). Towns that sprang up on the fringes of the desert grew and prospered (Butler 1920; Lassus 1947; Tchalenko 1958), and monasteries were built in the lonely sands near trade routes (MacAdam 1994; Hoyland 2009; Miller 2009; Cruikshank Dodd 2016, 541–42). This region was thus under the influence of the dominant Byzantine Empire throughout its history. The relationship between Byzantium and the Middle East was determined by historical factors that can be divided into four main periods, which will be explored below.

## FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW ART, CA. 320 TO CA. 650 CE

---

### Early Byzantine Architecture

During the third and fourth centuries CE, early Christians widely developed two principal architectural forms: the centralized tomb structure or *martyrium*, and the basilica church (see Mihaljević and Stanković chapters, this volume). Common in pre-Islamic Syria and Palestine, these inspired the first buildings in Islam. The great Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem was originally a *martyrium* protecting Christ's place of



burial, a circular building with columns supporting a dome. To this was added a large basilica to protect the devout worshippers who came to pray at the tomb. This church became a model upon which later, smaller churches all over the Middle East took their shape (Grabar 2006).

## Early Christian Sculpture and Painting

In other forms of art, Syria pointed the direction for change. Early on, the artistic taste of the time was developing along a path divided between a more naturalistic representation of nature and a patterned vision of the world, one more stylized, symbolic, and two-dimensional. In the fourth and fifth centuries, Sassanian styles and motifs became fashionable in architectural elements such as moldings and capitals (Nagel 2012). Over time, these elements become less naturalistic and more abstract; for example, the leafy acanthus capitals of the columns in the Church of St. Simeon Stylites changed, even in the course of building the church, to become stiffer and less naturalistic, the leaves carved on flat, patterned surfaces with deeply undercut shadows. The trend toward a patterned, two-dimensional style reached Constantinople, where it was most vividly illustrated in the sixth-century Church of St. Polyeuktos. While the church has been destroyed, the capitals remain, precisely carved with flat, stylized flowers, palms, and vines, taken directly from Sassanian examples (Figure 14.1).

The Classical sculptural tradition, nevertheless, was prolonged in Syria. Statues of deities and galloping cavaliers that can be dated well before the fifth and sixth centuries are preserved (Seyrig 1931–1971, *passim*). The horse and rider motif, ultimately derived from Roman examples, was particularly popular but this figure was also seen in Sassanian funerary art and in contemporary mosaic, sculpture, and metalwork. Another common motif is found on a basalt sarcophagus in the Damascus Museum carved with a series of arches, beneath each of which hangs a light (Figure 14.2). This design signifies the Direction of Truth, or the way to paradise, indicating the passage of the soul into the next world. Both the light and the horseman become important in the development of Islamic art.

The Middle East also shows evidence of the popularity of mosaic as a medium. Many examples from the fourth to seventh centuries have been preserved (Schick 2012), but very few of these wall decorations have survived in situ. Archaeological excavations have revealed mosaic floors in their original places. Early pavements in wealthy villas were decorated with Classical subjects in an illusionistic, Classical style, but the mosaic floors in northern Syria and the black basalt buildings of the Hauran gradually became more complicated in subject matter, the style more simplified, abstract, and symbolic. Christian churches were paved with mosaics showing fewer figural subjects in favor of abstract, patterned designs to convey ideas with spiritual meaning (see James chapter, this volume). To explain these images, more words were necessary. This development is seen in a fourth-century floor mosaic in a private villa in Apamea, on the margin of the desert: it shows a simple roundel containing a single Greek word “EYXPΩ” (Balty 1977),



**FIGURE 14.1.** Capital from the Polyuktos Monastery, sixth century. National Museum, Istanbul. Photo: E. C. Dodd.



**FIGURE 14.2.** Basalt slab from sarcophagus decorated with lamps hanging under an arcade and stylized birds, fifth–sixth centuries. Photo: E. C. Dodd.

meaning “live well!” or “be well!” This inscription replaces a contemporary Classical subject, that of a young woman personifying bountiful earth, holding a cornucopia filled with fruits and flowers signifying abundance, a wishful prospect for the owner of the residence. Here, a figure has been abandoned in favor of an inscription, entirely replaced by a single word.

## Smaller Portable Objects

The shift from naturalistic representation to abstract design and inscriptions is also seen in examples in silver, gold, ivory, and ceramics. Classical mythological subjects continued to dominate these media in the Levant, but by the fourth century, especially in Syria, this repertoire was gradually replaced by Christian subjects or symbols. Details of landscape—plants, flowers, water, and trees—appear in painting and mosaic to represent paradise or the future life. Specifically Christian symbols such as the cross, fish, lamb, and the rivers of paradise decorated gold jewelry, silver vessels, and ivories. Liturgical objects such as chalices, patens, lamps, and censers were decorated with scenes from the life of Christ and the saints (see Klein chapter, this volume). Secular pieces like platters for banquets, spoons, and mirrors were also decorated with religious symbols (see Paraki chapter, this volume). By the sixth century, this art of Syria and Palestine spread to the capital, Constantinople.

An important event occurred in the fifth century in Asia Minor: the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon was convened in 451 to determine the nature of Christ. It debated the relationship of the human and the divine natures of Christ, and what this made of His mother. The conclusions of the Council had a serious effect on the Church body (MacCulloch 2009). At the end of the Council, the Greek Orthodox pronounced the doctrine of the Trinity much as we know it today. It also favored the liturgy of Basil of Cappadocia, rather than the liturgy of James, brother of Christ and first bishop of Jerusalem. But the eastern churches—Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Syrian Orthodox, and Nestorian, among others—rejected the new doctrine and continued to cling to the older liturgy of James. The difference created a wound in the Church that was keenly felt in Syria (MacCulloch 2009, 231–55; Schick 2012, 99), leaving a large population dissatisfied with leadership from Constantinople. These churches were ready to fall under the spell of the Muslim conquest.

## THE MUSLIM CONQUEST IN THE EARLY SEVENTH CENTURY

---

The conquest of the Middle East in the mid-seventh century did not immediately change this artistic environment. In the early years, the conquering Arabs brought little that was

new. Instead, the Muslims adopted and adapted what they found there for their own artistic vocabulary. Pre-Islamic Arabic-speaking communities were well established here (Shahid 1995), in charge of the long-distance caravan routes; they were habituated to the Christian world of Byzantium, at least on its margins. Muslims encountered a deeply embedded Classical civilization that spoke largely Greek, but had now developed a Christian artistic vocabulary to convey their new faith, often utilizing Sassanian elements of style (Ballian 2012).

## Religious Architecture

The first Muslims employed local artists to build and decorate their monuments. Their architecture was a reflection of what they found locally, designs for centralized buildings along with the potential of the dome and the use of brick to both build and to decorate. Their earliest surviving monuments were adaptations of the martyrrium and the basilica. The earliest surviving Muslim building is the Dome of the Rock (680–687) in Jerusalem on the *Haram* (Temple Mount) (Grabar 2006; Flood 2009). This is a centralized building with a dome resting on vaults supported by a circle of paired columns, all enclosed within hexagonal walls. This structure is built on a site revered equally by Muslims, Jews, and Christians as the location of Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac. It also commemorates the location of the Night Flight of the Prophet Muhammad, carried to heaven on his horse, Buraq. The new monument varied only slightly from the nearby Holy Sepulcher; it also closely resembled several other, smaller buildings in Palestine, such as the building posited as the tomb of St. Sergios in Ruṣāfah (Krautheimer 1986, 261–62). The churches of Bosra and Izra also may have served as exemplars (Krautheimer 1986, 138–39).

Two major monuments have survived from the earliest Islamic period: the first congregational mosque of al-Aqsa and the magnificent Umayyad mosque in Damascus (Figure 14.3). Al-Aqsa was built next to the Dome of the Rock for devotional purposes. Here, the Muslims adopted the basilica plan, but turned it to a latitudinal direction: worshippers faced the longer *qibla* wall, in the direction of Mecca. Unfortunately, little of the original al-Aqsa remains, but the first mosque in Damascus (715) still stands in its original splendor. Built by the Caliph al-Walid (r. 705–715), it was originally the Cathedral of John the Baptist, a basilica church erected within a large Roman *temenos* that surrounded a temple dedicated to Zeus. At first the Muslims changed nothing and allowed Christians to worship in their church at the same time that Muslim ceremonies were held against one of the courtyard walls, facing Mecca. When this church was finally demolished, the Muslims rebuilt their mosque close to the same location, using materials from the church and adopting its basic basilica plan. The building was and still is surrounded on three sides by the great Roman *temenos* with a fountain in the center, the fountain that had served the Christian church for ablutions over several hundred years (Flood 2001). Other mosques built by the first Muslims in the East had a similar history: the Umayyad mosques in Diyarbekr (Amida), in southern Turkey, and down the old trade routes, through Aleppo (Borea), Ma'ret Naa'man (Ara), Hama (Epiphania),



FIGURE 14.3. Courtyard, Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, 715. Photo: E. C. Dodd.

Der'aa (Adraa), and the Decapolis (Cruikshank Dodd 2016c), thus establishing a pattern for major congregational mosques for the next 1,500 years.

Other components of early Islamic architecture have a similar history. The minaret, used for the call to prayer, a uniquely Muslim addition to the liturgy and an early feature of the first mosques, is another example: its form was adapted from that of Roman guard towers and early church towers of Syria and Palestine. Christian towers originally stood separate from the church, later becoming attached to the western façade. Usually, early minarets were embedded in the courtyard walls of the mosque.

The artistic vocabulary was similar to that used by Christians to decorate their church interiors. Only the symbols were changed to indicate their own faith: while the cross, fishes, and lamb never appear in Islamic monuments, in the early years iconographical features were taken over from Byzantium, lasting throughout the history of Islamic art. These include the following series:

### *Representation of a Christian Paradise*

The visual expression of a life after death was understood by the Muslim community and adopted freely from the Christian established vocabulary: acanthus, vines, grapes, fruit, freely-flowing water, and architectural elements to suggest the “heavenly mansions” were used to indicate an Islamic paradise. Over time, these motifs became less naturalistic and more patterned, but they never disappear from the Muslim artistic vocabulary.

### *Purely Abstract Geometric Patterns*

Such designs were already familiar in Early Christian art to describe the beauty and order of the other world. Islamic art adopted these forms and developed them to become intrinsically characteristic of its decorative art.

### *Figures Replaced by Inscriptions*

The decline of figural motifs in the Christian mosaics of Syria spread and became particularly important in Islamic art. From the beginning, no figures were used on the walls of Muslim religious buildings. Rising Iconoclasm in Syria supported this movement well before the conquest (Cruikshank Dodd 1969a; and Brubaker chapter, this volume).

Inscriptions replaced figures to indicate the presence of divinity. The territory conquered by Muslims was largely non-Chalcedonian and, in some areas, even before Islam, Christians replaced the figures shown in churches by inscriptions. Muslims used this device to illustrate their message: God revealed Himself to the prophet Muhammad not in the shape of a man, but in the form of a book, the holy Koran. Verses from the Koran, therefore, lent themselves as an appropriate way to decorate the walls of a mosque, especially as there was well-established precedent for this practice in the churches of Palestine (Cruikshank Dodd 1969a, 1998c).

### *Light*

Light became an important Muslim symbol to signify the Direction of Truth. It occurs in the earliest *mihrab* from the mosque of al Aqsa and on early Islamic coinage. This artistic motif directly illustrates the Koran, Surah 43:23, a verse that refers to the “light in the niche,” and the direction of truth. The light in a niche already appears in Early Christian art, both in Christian mosaics and in sculpture, as we have seen (Cruikshank Dodd 1998b).

All these elements are illustrated in the earliest surviving examples of Islamic religious art and architecture. In the Dome of the Rock, for example, no figures are shown; instead, the naturalistic vines and decorative Sassanian elements cover the walls, showing the direction of paradise. High above these are words from the Koran, expressing the truth of Islam, the Revelation.

## **Civic Architecture and Its Embellishment**

In the early Islamic period, and into the seventh century, there is no evidence of a dislike for figures or for the depiction of nature outside the religious precinct. This is most evident in the fortresses the Umayyads erected to protect the caravan routes from unruly tribes in the Syrian and Jordanian deserts (Ballian 2012; Cruikshank Dodd 2016). These rather elaborate buildings, palaces, farms, or “castles,” most of them with baths and *caravanserais*, offered relief and shelter for man and camel on the long treks. They were decorated in the high fashion of their time, a mixture of Sassanian and Late

Hellenistic elements often put together in unusual ways. Motifs popular in Sassanian art, like the cavalier, the distant and formalized seated ruler, or Dionysian maidens with musical instruments were displayed alongside the common, Classical inhabited vines, naked ladies, lively birds, and musicians, familiar in Late Classical and Early Byzantine mosaics.

The church and palace of Qasr Ibn Wardan, built by Justinian outside his town of Ruṣāfah, served as the model for establishments built by the Umayyads to guard the caravan routes to the East (Cruikshank Dodd 2016). Pre-Islamic palaces on the periphery of the desert, like Bosra and Qanawat, offered Byzantine models for Muslim architects in the Syrian desert. Patterned brick, or brick-and-stone, which became so much a part of later Muslim architecture, was inspired by the buildings of Qasr Ibn Wardan and the early Roman fortress of Qasr Halabat near Palmyra.

## Smaller Portable Objects

The portable arts of Islam offer no exceptions and it is frequently difficult to tell smaller early Muslim objects apart from Christian ones, except by their inscriptions (Cruikshank Dodd 2016). Some fourth-century lamps are adorned with inscriptions in Arabic or Greek depending on the preference of the owner, and some Muslim lamps in Syria were decorated with motifs suitable for either Christian or Muslim patrons well into the twelfth century.

Over the following centuries, Islamic art matured to express the culture, geographical area, and religious experience of the place where it was made. Different areas of the Muslim world absorbed different characteristics, but the essential elements described here are always present, born in the Byzantine world of the fifth and sixth centuries.

## THE CONTINUITY OF CHRISTIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE UNDER MUSLIM RULE

---

While for many Christians under Muslim rule, contact with Byzantium was more difficult at this time, village communities isolated in the mountains and monasteries in the desert were left relatively undisturbed by their Muslim overlords. In these regions, a rich Christian cultural legacy endured. Monasteries were storehouses of learning, and monks preserved their ancient heritage, especially their icons and manuscripts. They not only copied and recopied the writings of Early Christian scholars, they wrote medical, scientific, and astronomical texts, recorded myths, and wrote liturgies. They copied Classical texts into Syriac and Aramaic, preserving them for future European scholarship. This is particularly true of Egypt, where large monastic establishments continued to live under the Arabs, such as the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, the Monastery of St. Anthony

on the Red Sea, and the great monasteries of the Wadi Natrun and Fayum (see Bolman chapter, this volume). Most Christian artifacts from this period have come down to us from these isolated monasteries, and examples of continuing Christian art in wood, metal, icons, ivory, and ceramics attest to a vibrant Christian life under the Muslims. In Egypt, textile remains are significant because they survived in the Egyptian climate (see Woodfin chapter, this volume), whereas in damper areas of the Middle East, textiles disintegrated and disappeared. Also, while many Christians in the big cities along the coast converted to Islam and their monuments have not survived, important centers inland, such as Damascus, Jerusalem, Aleppo, and Cairo, retained a strong Christian presence until today. However, although the churches there survived Muslim occupation, they were frequently turned into mosques and very little of their decoration remains, so that a continuing tradition of monumental Christian art under the Muslims is not easy to discover.

What has survived reveals that Christian art remained conservative in these areas. The basilica church type remained more popular than the centralized church of the Middle and Late Byzantine Empire. And since Christians under Muslim rule were not wealthy, they could not afford mosaics; the art of fresco substituted. A basilica was often painted with scenes copied from the earlier period, such as the Christ in Majesty in the apse, the cavalier, or the nursing Virgin, all of which had specifically Christian content and, at least in part, reflected the liturgy of St. James (Cruikshank Dodd 2009). That is not to say that these areas lost contact with Constantinople. Monks traveled widely between monasteries and congregational churches over the entire medieval period, and painters brought with them inspiration, new styles, and iconographic motifs directly from the Imperial capital (Cruikshank Dodd 2004, 101–4). Although Christian art under the Muslims frequently displays an older iconography and a provincial style, it remains essentially “Byzantine” in character. This can be seen in a number of Christian monuments that have survived along with their decoration. Several of these early examples are church pavement mosaics from the early Umayyad period. The best known of these is a mosaic from a church in the Golan Heights that is decorated with typical geometric patterns of the fifth and sixth centuries, along with camels and camel drivers, celebrating pilgrimage and trade.

## THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE CRUSADERS, 1187–1304

---

When the Crusaders captured lands along the Mediterranean eastern coast, the local residents welcomed them as saviors. Over the 200 years of Crusader occupation of *Outremer*, new churches and monasteries sprang up everywhere. They were built by European overlords who settled in the area, and also by native Christian communities profiting from service to their Crusader masters. Older Christian communities



discovered new wealth. While much of this development was destroyed when the Crusaders returned home, enough has survived to point to a Christian artistic revival in the Middle East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Folda 1995 and Georgopoulou chapter, this volume).

Jerusalem was the focus of this artistic revival, but it did not last long: the city fell to Salah ad-Din in 1189. Crusader architecture from this period is largely based on the European Gothic style (Folda 1995), both for castles and churches, although the Crusaders freely adopted architectural techniques and decorative motifs from their Muslim surroundings, as well. Many of the older, more isolated monasteries and the local established communities in the countryside still utilized artistic models from Constantinople, while in the countryside, the simple basilica church continued to be preferred.

Although buildings from the Crusader period survive, for the most part their decoration did not. In the church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, however, mosaics in the nave and fine paintings have come to light dating from the mid-twelfth century (Kühnel 1988, 1–148; see James chapter, this volume and Figure 25.1). The Church of the Hospitallers of St. John in Emmaus still shows badly deteriorated fragments of fine wall paintings from the third quarter of the twelfth century (Weyl Carr 1982; Kühnel 1988, 149–91); some fragments of painting have been discovered in Jerusalem and in the Theoctistus Monastery in the Judaean desert (ca. 1187) (Kühnel 1988, 181–91). These paintings show that old iconographic traditions were preserved while their painterly style was more up-to-date, following Constantinopolitan trends (Weyl Carr 1982).

Crusaders and local Christians continued to build churches for another hundred years. A small chapel in Beirut has preserved Crusader painting (Cruikshank Dodd 2001, no. 21). Although paintings described by William of Tyre in the Church of John the Baptist in Beirut no longer exist, in the Holy Valley of the Qadisha in Lebanon, where hundreds of monks lived in crude habitations among the rock and caves, some painting has survived untouched. This, along with work in local village churches and in Syrian towns on the desert fringes, has revealed a rich painterly tradition that illustrates the rebirth of Christian art during the Crusading period (Cruikshank Dodd 2001). While these paintings are sometimes provincial in character, they are witness to the fact that the monks were in touch with Constantinople during the Crusades. The paintings in the Monastery church of Mar Musa el-Habashi (Moses the Ethiopian) near Nebek, about thirty kilometers from Damascus, provides an example (Cruikshank Dodd 2001). This monastery, built in the sixth century along a busy, commercial desert route, was first renovated in 1055 and decorated with frescoes which survive, displaying a Christ in Majesty in the semi-dome of the apse, with saints painted on the supports of the enclosing arch. A Last Judgement fills the entire west wall (Figure 14.4/Color Plate 6B). While provincial and stylistically closer to Islamic art than Byzantine, these works show iconography clearly inspired by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (Cruikshank Dodd 2001, 85).

The subjects painted in the Crusader churches found their way to Europe during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but the Crusaders did not only bring Christian painterly



FIGURE 14.4 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 6B). Fresco painting of the Last Judgment, Mar Musa el-Habashi, near Nebek, Syria, 1192. Photo: E. C. Dodd.

ideas with them back to Europe. Bronze vessels fabricated in Damascus were popular in medieval Europe, and Islamic tiles and textiles were imported across the Mediterranean as well (Cruikshank Dodd 1969b). It may be claimed that the spark that lit the flame of the Renaissance in Europe was ignited by direct contact with the Middle East. While Byzantium certainly played a part in the development of Renaissance painting in Europe, some of this contact was indirectly through Palestine in the Levant, not through the Byzantine capital itself.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

---

Some of the ideas presented in this chapter are in need of further exploration. These include the part played by the newly populated areas of the Syrian desert, along the trade routes around Palmyra, in the development of Byzantine and Islamic art. Early Byzantine art was rooted in the Classical tradition where it met strident challenges from the East; too often, the impact of Sassanian art already in Syria has been underplayed. And the effect of the Council of Chalcedon on the artistic life of non-Chalcedonians has also been underestimated in understanding the development of Byzantine art. The continuing tradition of non-Chalcedonian art in the period under early Muslim rule needs to be more extensively documented. During this period, some Christians turned away from the mainstream of Byzantine art, and it is this tradition, carried back by the Crusaders and by fleeing immigrants, rather than the art of Constantinople, that appears to have caught the imagination of medieval Europe. Further, in this period, the extent of Levantine influence in stimulating European artistic development during and after the Crusades in general needs more study. Not only was there uninterrupted and continuing contact between the Middle East and Europe during the Crusades, but many longtime European inhabitants of the Levant returned home and refugees fled Muslim armies in this era (Cruikshank Dodd 1969b). The impact of this migration on Western art is another area in need of further examination.

## REFERENCES

---

- Ballian, A. 2012. "Country Estates, Material Culture and the Celebration of Princely Life: Islamic Art and the Secular Domain." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 200–10.
- Balty, J. 1977. *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie* (Brussels).
- Butler, H. C. 1920. *Syria*. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria, 1904–5 and 1909, Division II, Architecture Section B; Northern Syria (Leiden).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 1969a. "The Image of the Word." *Berytus* 28: 35–79.
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 1969b. "On the Origins of Medieval Dinanderie: The Equestrian Statue in Islam." *AB* 5: 219–32.

- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 1998a. "Offering." In *Encyclopaedia of Comparative Iconography*, vol. II, edited by H. E. Roberts, 219–231 (London and Chicago).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 1998b. "Light." In *Encyclopaedia of Comparative Iconography*, vol. I, edited by H. E. Roberts, 498–500 (London and Chicago).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 1998c. "Logos/Word." In *Encyclopaedia of Comparative Iconography*, vol. I, edited by H. E. Roberts, 515–17 (London and Chicago).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2001. *Mar Musa el-Habashi: A Study in Medieval Painting in Syria* (Toronto).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2004. *Medieval Painting in the Lebanon* (Wiesbaden).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2009. "Painting the Liturgy in a Non-Chalcedonian Church." In *Αναθηματα Εορτικά: Studies in Honour of Thomas F. Mathews*, edited by J. Alchermes and H. C. Evans, 135–42 (Mainz).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2016. "Palmyra and Poidebard." *ARAM*, 28: 541–54.
- Flood, F. B. 2001. *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies in the Making of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (London).
- Flood, F. B. 2009. "Review of Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock*." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 38, 4: 113–15.
- Folda, J. 1995. *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1197* (Cambridge).
- Grabar, O. 2006. *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge).
- Hoyland, H. R. 2009. "Late Roman Provincial Arabs, Monophysites, Monks and Arab Tribes: A Problem of Centre and Periphery." *Semitica et Classica* 2: 117–39.
- Krautheimer, Richard, with Slobodan Ćurčić. 1986. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 4th ed. (New Haven and London).
- Kühnel, G. 1988. *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Berlin).
- Lassus, J. 1947. *Sanctuaires chrétiennes de Syrie, Essai sur la genèse, la forme et l'usage liturgique des édifices du culte chrétien en Syrie de la IIIe siècle à la conquête musulmane*, Institut Français Archéologique de Beyrouth (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, 42) (Paris).
- MacAdam, H. 1994. "Settlement and Settlement Patterns in Northern and Central Jordan." In *Byzantium and Early Islamic Near East, Vol. 2, Land Use and Settlement Patterns*, edited by G. R. D. King and A. Cameron, 49–94 (Princeton).
- MacCulloch, D. 2009. *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London).
- Miller, F. 2009. "Christian Monasticism in Roman Syria and the Birth of Mahomet." *Semitica et Classica* 2: 97–115.
- Nagel, A. 2012. "Sassanian Expansion to the Mediterranean." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 27–31.
- Seyrig, H. 1931–1971. "Antiquités syriennes." In *Syria*, vols. 12–48, *passim*.
- Shahid, I. 1995. *Barbarians and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* (Washington, DC).
- Schick, R. 2012. "Mosaics during the Byzantine and Early Islamic Period." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 98–102.
- Tchalenko, G. 1958. *Villages antiques de la Syrie du nord: Le massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, Institut Français Archéologique de Beyrouth (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique), 3 vols. (Paris).
- Thomas, T. 2012. "'Ornament of Excellence' from 'the Miserable Gains of Commerce': Luxury Arts and Byzantium Culture." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 124–27.
- Weyl Carr, A. 1982. "The Mural Painting of Abu Ghosh and the Patronage of Manuel Comnenus in the Holy Land." In *The Holy Land in Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 152, edited by J. Folda, 215–43 (Jerusalem and Oxford).

**FURTHER READING**

---

- Butler, H. C. 1929. *Early Churches in Syria: Fourth to Seventh Century* (Princeton).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2007. "Jerusalem, 'Fons et Origo.'" In *Interaction: Artistic Exchange between the Western and Eastern Worlds in the Medieval Period*, edited by C. Hourihane, 11–27 (Princeton).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 2014. "Double Churches in the Lebanon." *Parole de l'Orient* 39: 313–37.
- Evans, H. C. 2012. "Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition (7th–9th Centuries)." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 4–27.
- Foss, C. 2012. "Arab-Byzantine Coin: Money as Cultural Continuity." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 136–44.
- Piccirillo, M. 1992. *Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman).
- Ratliff, B. 2012. "Christian Communities during the Early Islamic Centuries." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 32–50.

---

*Looking Westward*

---



## CHAPTER 15

---

# ITALY, THE CRUSADER STATES, AND CYPRUS

---

MARIA GEORGOPOULOU

## INTRODUCTION

---

[I]n the year 1240 . . . there was born in the city of Florence, Giovanni, surnamed Cimabue. . . . As he grew . . . instead of attending to his lessons, Cimabue spent all the day in painting on his books and papers, men, horses, houses, and such things. To this natural inclination fortune was favorable, for certain painters of Greece, who had been summoned by the rulers of Florence to restore the almost forgotten art of painting in the city, began at this time to work in the chapel of the Gondi in S. Maria Novella; and Cimabue would often escape from school and stand all day watching them, until his father and the painters themselves judging that he was apt for painting, he was placed under their instruction. Nature, however, aided by constant practice, enabled him greatly to surpass both in design and coloring the masters who had taught him. For they, never caring to advance in their art, did everything not in the good manner of ancient Greece, but after the rude manner of those times.

—Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 1568  
(<http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/vasari/vasari1.htm>)

The aphorisms of art historian Giorgio Vasari have tainted the appreciation that Western Europe, and especially Italy, had of Byzantine art. This chapter explores the complex relationship of Byzantine art with three regions (Italy, the Crusader States, and Cyprus) in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. It presents different interpretations of Byzantine art in Palermo, Apulia, and Venice, in Crusader Jerusalem, and Acre, as well as on the island of Cyprus, focusing on the medium of mosaics, relics and reliquaries, stylistic borrowings, and the political use of objects and Byzantine iconography.



The common Roman heritage and the brilliance of Byzantine art provided a strong background on which to build connections in Italy for centuries to come. Some of these connections had to do with the movement of artists and ideas. Others were triggered by the presence of Byzantine artworks in Italy and the West. Prominently displayed in palaces or church treasuries, these Byzantine artifacts held an aura of sanctity while the luster of their impeccable craftsmanship ensured the everlasting impact of Byzantine court art on that of princely courts throughout the Mediterranean basin (Grabar 1997). Certain Byzantine objects, techniques, and art forms had a special resonance in the different Christian cultures that came into contact with Byzantium.

## ITALY

---

### Byzantine Art and Imperial Aspirations

In the sixth century, Emperor Justinian (r. 527–565) managed to take control of parts of Italy and North Africa in the Western Roman Empire that had been conquered by the Germanic ruler Odoacer in the year 476. The mosaic representation of Justinian and his wife Theodora in the apse of the church of San Vitale in Ravenna was most probably set up by bishop Maximian in 547. Although the imperial couple never set foot in Ravenna, its portrayal in San Vitale acts as a powerful reminder of Byzantine control over Italy (Krautheimer 1986, 234). The refined medium of gold and glass mosaic was testimony to the highest achievements of Byzantine art in Constantinople (see James chapter, this volume). Shared between Ravenna and the capital, it remained a hallmark of Byzantium in Italy throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance (Nagel and Wood 2010, 13); many churches in medieval Rome were also adorned with extensive mosaics (Wilpert 2007). While the organic relationship of Early Byzantine art and Italy was severed after the Byzantine emperor lost control of Ravenna (751), the imperial significance of the mosaics of Ravenna maintained their prestige and guided others to utilize Byzantine artistic practices and artifacts in order to gain political momentum and boost their clout.

As upstarts, the Normans of Sicily appropriated the imperial trappings of Byzantine culture in the context of an actively and openly multicultural amalgamation of shared Mediterranean court cultures. The exquisite mosaics, extensive Byzantine iconography, carefully crafted marble floor, and an Islamic-inspired *muqarnas* ceiling of the Cappella Palatina of Roger II (r. 1132–1143) in Palermo exemplify the ambitious project of the Norman king who challenged all powers in the region and further afield (Tronzo 1997). The use of the image of Christ *Pantokratōr* in the churches of Monreale and Cefalù shows a clever adaptation of a powerful element of Byzantine iconography, typically reserved for the dome of an Orthodox church, into the space of the apse. Beyond the reimagining of church decoration to fit the exigencies of specific spaces and rituals,

one image alone suffices to illustrate Roger's presumptuous appropriation of Byzantine political ideology: a mosaic showing Christ crowning Roger II in the church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio (or La Martorana) in Palermo (1143–1151) sponsored by Roger's powerful admiral, George of Antioch (Figure 15.1) (Kitzinger 1990, 190–91). The image



FIGURE 15.1. Coronation of King Roger. Palermo, Church of the Martorana. © 2018. Photo Scala, Florence/Fondo Edifici di Culto—Min. dell'Interno.

draws on Byzantine imperial iconography of Christ bestowing power on the emperor, as seen in the ivory of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, dated to 945 (*Glory of Byzantium*, Fig. 140). Like the Byzantine ivory, in the Martorana mosaic Christ places the crown on Roger's head. The ruler, identified by a Greek inscription as *Ρογέριος ρήξ* (rex), wears a Byzantine imperial *loros* and crown, but unlike Constantine VII in the Moscow ivory, he faces directly toward the viewer. While the clothing and attributes of the Norman king unabashedly usurp the Byzantine ideology of divinely-bestowed rule, the similarity of the facial features of Roger and Christ and the direct engagement of the Norman king's gaze with the viewer offer a brilliant solution to circumvent Roger's dispute with the pope.

Venice, too, shows a similar attitude in relation to the Byzantine Empire. Several strategies that coalesced in what is known as the "myth of Venice" were employed to transform this provincial town on the lagoon into a metropolis with imperial aspirations to the detriment of Byzantium. Founded in 421, Venice played a vital role as an intermediary between Greek East and Latin West, originally through trade with Constantinople, later through its colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean, and finally as a safe haven for Greek émigrés following 1453 (Nicol 1988).

The arrival of the relics of St. Mark from Alexandria in 828 prompted the construction of the basilica of San Marco, which was modeled on the famous church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. Built in 1063 and decorated with mosaics from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, the basic shape of the church is a mixture of Italian and Byzantine features, notably the treatment of the eastern arm as the termination of a basilican building with a main apse and two side chapels, rather than as an equal arm of a truly centralized structure (Demus 1988, 5). The extensive Christological cycle of mosaics was amplified by the addition of stories from the Lives of St. Peter, St. Clement, and of course the patron saint, St. Mark, with a lot of emphasis placed on his place of origin, Egypt.

To boast about the preferential status given to Venetian merchants by the Byzantine emperors in special tax treaties from 1082 onward, *doge* Ordelafo Falier ordered from Constantinople in 1102 an elaborate gold and enamel altarpiece known as the Pala d'Oro to be placed in San Marco (Figure 15.2). The altarpiece measures 3 × 2 meters, is made of gold and silver, and is adorned with 250 *cloisonné* enamels and numerous gems. The upper part displays images from the life of Christ, while the lower part tells the story of the arrival of the relics of St. Mark in Venice. The central section showcases the enthroned Christ, while at the bottom the figure of the standing Virgin is flanked by Empress Irini, wife of John II Komnenos (r. 1118–1143), and on an equal footing on the left, the *doge* Ordelafo Falier. The figure of the *doge* was added to the original plaques that had come from the monastery of Christ Pantokratōr in Constantinople usurping the place that would have normally been reserved for the Byzantine emperor (Buckton and Osborne 2000, 43–49). Thus, an exquisite piece of Byzantine craftsmanship was co-opted by the Venetians to promote their version of events in the ducal basilica of San Marco.

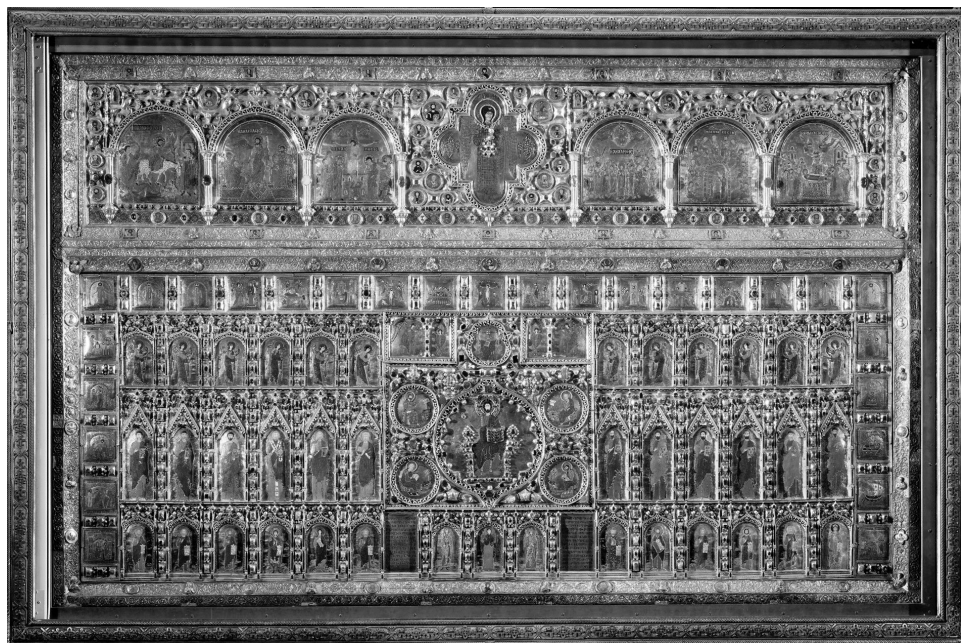


FIGURE 15.2. Pala d'Oro. Venice, San Marco Basilica. © 2018. Photo Scala, Florence.

A century later, the plunder of Constantinople by the Latin crusaders in 1204 brought imperial trophies from Byzantium—the four bronze horses possibly from the Hippodrome in Constantinople, the porphyry Tetrarchs, and the so-called columns of Acre, just to mention the most famous ones—that were set up outside the basilica of San Marco to proclaim Venice's military success against the Byzantines and to support Venice's claims over the Mediterranean (Perry 1977; Jacoff 1993; Maguire and Nelson 2010). Inside the church, Byzantine icons, liturgical vessels, and saintly relics enhanced the sacred character of the state church legitimizing Venice's involvement in the crusade (Perocco 1984; Pincus 1984). As Otto Demus has shown, the Byzantine and new "Byzantinizing" sculptures made in Venice demonstrated traces of an "imperialistic archaism," which played a major role in shaping the political identity of Venice as the head of a new maritime empire (Demus 1955). Also, the atrium of the basilica was decorated with an extensive cycle of Old Testament scenes (1225–1275/1278), including the mosaics illustrating the Genesis, which are faithful copies of a fifth- or sixth-century Byzantine manuscript like the Cotton Genesis now in the British Library (Cotton MS Otho B VI; Weitzmann and Kessler 1986). In charge of a long-lived empire, the Republic saw itself as an heir of Rome and Byzantium and this affected its relationship with Byzantine culture. The booty from Constantinople played a catalytic role in the formation of the new political image of Venice in the thirteenth century; the Byzantine objects adorned the major public space of Venice proclaiming the special relationship between Venice and Constantinople and projecting Venice as a lawful heir to Byzantium.

Not all Byzantine artifacts were stolen or misappropriated, however. Political relationships and peace treaties were often sealed with the gift of relics, precious objects, and imperial silks from the Byzantine emperor, which held a prestigious position in advertising the pedigree and aspirations of their recipients. One of the most prized contributions of Byzantine art to the West were relics encased in sumptuous reliquaries. The outstanding accomplishments of Byzantine metalwork, especially cloisonné enamel, often resulted in a creative dialogue with artists in the region who received these unique pieces. The Byzantine past of the diocese of the Greek city of Monopoli in Apulia is witnessed by the icon of the “Madonna della Madia,” which according to legend came from the sea on a raft of beams needed to complete the cathedral in 1117 and has since been a miraculous patron of the town, and a precious gold cloisonné enamel reliquary of the True Cross of small dimensions (6.4 × 8.4 cm) attributed to a Constantinopolitan workshop of the eleventh century, now at the Museo Diocesano of Monopoli. Once decorated with precious gems on the cover, the reliquary had a sliding cover with the Crucifixion and two wings with Sts. Peter and Paul, and it can be easily compared to the Byzantine staurotheque contained within the Stavelot triptych (Morgan Library, New York) and the famous Limburg Staurotheque (Volbach 1969).

Often, relics were offered by the Byzantines as diplomatic gifts to princes and abbots. For example, the *Mandylion* or Holy Face, a thirteenth-century sacred cloth now preserved at the Church of St. Bartholomew of the Armenians in Genoa, is an invaluable relic from Constantinople, as it is believed to be the *acheiropoieiton* (not made by human hands) impression of Christ’s face that cured the ailing King Agbar of Edessa (Wolf 1998). As the picture frame suggests, the Byzantine copy of the Holy Face in Genoa was donated by Emperor John II Palaiologos (1342–1391) to the doge Leonardo Montaldo in Genoa, in an attempt by the Byzantine emperor to gain military assistance against the Ottoman Turks. The disk and the decoration with precious stones were added in 1702.

## Artistic Exchanges in the Art of the Thirteenth Century: *Maniera Greca* and the Naturalistic Style

Later painting in Italy displays further affinities with Byzantine art. The stylistic proliferation of naturalistic and humanistic elements that permeate the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Byzantium and Italy must be explored within the context of the movement of artists and objects. For example, an increased interest in emotion culminates in the treatment of human pain and sorrow (pathos) of Christ’s Passion in the churches of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi (1164) and the Chapel of the Scrovegni family in Padua (or Arena Chapel, ca. 1303–1305) painted by Giotto. The small church of St. Panteleimon, although located in a remote provincial town in the Republic of North Macedonia, was founded by a member of the imperial Byzantine family and decorated by some of the best artists of the period (Sinkević 2000). The emotional immediacy and persuasive articulation of the motherly grief of the Virgin Mary for the loss of her Son

in the scene of the Lamentation reached an utmost perfection in the art of Nerezi. The lamenting angels in Giotto's Lamentation at the Arena Chapel in Padua are so closely related to those in Nerezi that it begs a careful study of the ways in which Byzantine art affected the style of thirteenth-century Italian painting. Or is it the other way around? More than fifty years ago, Kurt Weitzmann in his seminal essay on the Crusader icons from Sinai posited that the angels who weep violently over the cross at an otherwise typically Byzantine icon of the Crucifixion are a Western feature (Weitzmann 1963, 180). Famously, of course, Giotto has been hailed as the first master to have rejected the Byzantine style (or *maniera greca*) in favor of greater naturalism and emotion, thereby revolutionizing the art of painting and ushering the Renaissance.

Although the specific channels of communication are still debated, the similarities between several images in Byzantium and Italy are so striking, that the significance of the *maniera greca* for artists such as Berlinghiero and Bonaventura Berlinghieri, Coppo di Marcovaldo, Guido da Siena, and Cimabue is unquestionable. Throughout the thirteenth century the particular use of gold background, coloring, striations, as well as iconographic details, leave little doubt that Byzantine icons of the Mother and Child served as models for Luccan, Siennese, and Florentine religious images (Corrie 1996; Corrie 2003). Despite its Romanesque linearity, Berlinghiero Berlinghieri's 1230 painting of the Mother and Child now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art follows the Byzantine prototype to the letter: the empty gold background, the purple mantle, the underlying *maphorion*, the pose of Christ, the loving hands of the Virgin are all elements that ultimately go back to one of the holiest Byzantine images, the celebrated *Hodegetria* ("she who guides the way") icon from Constantinople, which hailed a sacred origin by the hand of St. Luke (Belting 1994, 365). Similarly, while the parapet and playful gesture of Christ in Duccio di Buoninsegna's Madonna and Child of ca. 1295–1300, from the Stroganoff collection also at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, bring this image into a dialogue with a lifelike depiction of the world, the sorrowful expression of the Virgin reflecting her foreknowledge of her Son's crucifixion hails back to Byzantium (Herbert 2010–2011).

The visible signs of death in the body of Christ on the cross on twelfth-century Byzantine icons from the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai have been compared with the crucifix that Cimabue (ca. 1240–1302) painted for the Florentine basilica of Santa Croce ca. 1265; Christ is shown nearly naked with closed eyes, his face lifeless and in a contorted pose stressing his suffering and humanity (Figure 15.3). All the while the gilding and monumentality of the cross link it to the Byzantine tradition. Some of these exchanges have been attributed to the intermediary of the Crusades or the Franciscans and other mendicant orders, as Anne Derbes has so convincingly showed (Derbes 1998, 159–72; Derbes and Neff 2004). New forms of affective worship may have contributed to the need for more evocative Passion images.

The relationship between the new humanistic style permeate the art produced well into the fourteenth century, as we can see in the mosaics of the Monastery of the Chora in Constantinople (decorated in 1318–1321). Here the so-called Palaiologan style, the



FIGURE 15.3. Cimabue (Cenni di Pepo called 1240–1302): Crucifix (before the flood). Florence, Santa Croce. © 2018. Photo Scala, Florence.

ample use of landscape, and decorative architectural settings showcase beautifully the ties between East and West (Demus 1975).

## THE CRUSADER STATES AND MULTIETHNIC PATRONAGE

---

Relics and reliquaries provide a link not only to Constantinople but to the Holy Land as well. The Crusades and the Crusader States that were established by Western European

knights in the Holy Land (1099–1291) were by definition a stage for the intermingling of artistic traditions. Here, Byzantine art represented a strong local cultural stratum that acted as a framework within which Crusader and Latin newcomers developed their own culture. Geography, geology, and local materials and workforce conditioned the form and techniques adopted in the architecture of castles, fortifications, or churches. Religious painting in the Crusader states displays a blending of Byzantine and Western iconographic elements and styles in royal manuscripts, Crusader icons, and monumental mosaic cycles like that of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (see James chapter, this volume, Figure 25.1).

Originally inscribed within local construction practices (Edwards 1987; Kennedy 1994), the military architecture of the Crusaders offers impressive new forms in the thirteenth century: enclosure or “concentric” castles that incorporated cloisters, chapels, refectories, and dormitories (see Arvanitopoulos chapter, this volume). The military orders of the Hospitallers and Templars poured plenty of resources into castle building in reconquered areas like Belvoir in the Holy Land, or in new construction such as the Crac des Chevaliers, the Hospital of Acre, or the castle of Chlemoutsi in Greece (Folda 2005, 135–40, 276–79; Athanasoulis 2013). New Crusader construction can be identified by numerous masons’ marks and a distinct Crusader masonry (e.g., embossed stones).

One of the most important acts of the Crusaders was to refurbish the holy sites in the Holy Land. Among the large variety of building types found in the area, the majority of sizable churches were three-aisled basilicas ending in three apses, a type that became dominant in the Crusader Latin East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Pringle 1993–2009). The form that all these shrines took under the patronage of the Crusaders was doubly important. On the one hand, patrons had to showcase the old vestiges of the buildings in order to stress the continuity of the biblical sites from their Early Christian foundations or *martyria*. On the other hand, the signature of Crusader patronage had to be visible in the modernity of the structure (Ousterhout 2003). Nowhere is this more palpable than in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Every effort was made to preserve the old parts of the Byzantine church, while the structure was refurbished with pointed arches, capitals, acanthus capitals, a bell tower, some figural sculpture as in the southern façade of the Holy Sepulcher, and state-of-the-art Gothic ribbed vaulting, suggesting the importation of artists well versed in the new French style of architecture (Ousterhout 2004).

The exceptional modifications and decoration of the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, designated as the coronation church for the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, displays the active interaction between local and Byzantine traditions intertwined with Western building practices and styles. Very few changes were made to the sixth-century structure. Two bell towers were added on the western façade, giving it a Romanesque appearance, and elegant portals and capitals adorned the cave of the Nativity (Folda 1995a, 175–245). The Byzantine mosaics (1165–1169) that were sponsored by the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos and the Latin king Amalric are signed by three artists whose names denote a Syrian, Greek, and (possibly) Latin origin, suggesting a multiethnic composition of the workforce (Hunt 1991). The painted columns in the nave also fuse



traditional Byzantine iconography with Western elements. For example, the posture of donors at the feet of a full-length icon of the Byzantine Virgin *Glykophilousa* (the sweet-kissing mother of God) parallels that of a pilgrim to the shrine of St. James of Compostela who kneels in front of an iconic image of St. James the Major or an effigy of the king of Norway Olaf in Crusader guise standing next to a portrait of the monk St. Anthony (Kühnel 1988, 15–22, 40–43, 86–88). Obviously in these cases, the patrons strove to sponsor a monument that showed affinities with their own cultural heritage.

Similar multivalent artistic languages permeate the Psalter of Queen Melisende from Jerusalem (British Library, MS Egerton 1139, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8095>), dated to 1131–1143 (Buchthal 1957, 1–14, 139–40; Folda 1995a, 137–63; Zeitler 2000). Made for the personal use of the daughter of King Baldwin II, it displays a mixture of typical Byzantine iconography while some other illuminations show signs of Latin sources as well as Western and Islamic decorative motifs. The obvious connection to an English prelate poses questions about the scriptorium that produced it. The scenes from the life of Christ are closely related to Byzantine manuscripts of the eleventh century made to fit a full-page format. As we see in the scene of the Agony in the Garden, for example (f. 7), there is no attempt to depict any natural features of the landscape so the space around the figures is left awkwardly empty, filled by a Byzantinizing golden background (Figure 15.4/Color Plate 8A). Buchthal has shown that the artist who signed as “*Basilius me fecit*” was well versed in Byzantine iconography but must have been a Westerner who had access to a rich library of Greek manuscripts, possibly at the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Folda posits that Basilius may have been born in the Latin East.

Obviously, much of the art of the period focuses on the holy war of the Crusaders and equates their deeds with the sacred history of the Bible. The richly illustrated Arsenal Bible (Arsenal MS 5211) attributed to the French king Louis IX (r. 1214–1270), portrays the biblical armies as Crusaders, with all the military apparatus of the European armies: identifiable coats of arms, armories, shields, and swords. Among its eclectic sources tying the book to French manuscripts from Paris, scholars have singled out a variety of Middle Byzantine manuscript traditions pointing to Constantinople: the Octateuchs, the Book of Kings, and aristocratic psalters. King David follows Byzantine archetypes from as august a source as the aristocratic Paris Psalter in Constantinople, the portraits of King Solomon show either imperial Byzantine regalia or a Byzantine crown to remind the viewer of the strong Byzantine roots of their rule in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, while the frontispiece to Joshua is ultimately based on a later adaptation of the tenth-century Byzantine Joshua Roll (Buchthal 1957, 54–68; Weiss 1992; Weiss 1998, 129–45). Byzantine iconography was needed ideologically in order to secure a viable state for provisioning and sustaining the Crusader kingdom. Similarly, the style combines Byzantine and Gothic elements in the modeling of the faces or the treatment of the landscape blended skillfully.

Of particular interest from an iconographic and stylistic point of view, but also raising many issues regarding religious practices and issues of doctrine and ritual, are the 160 Crusader icons found in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. Several stylistic

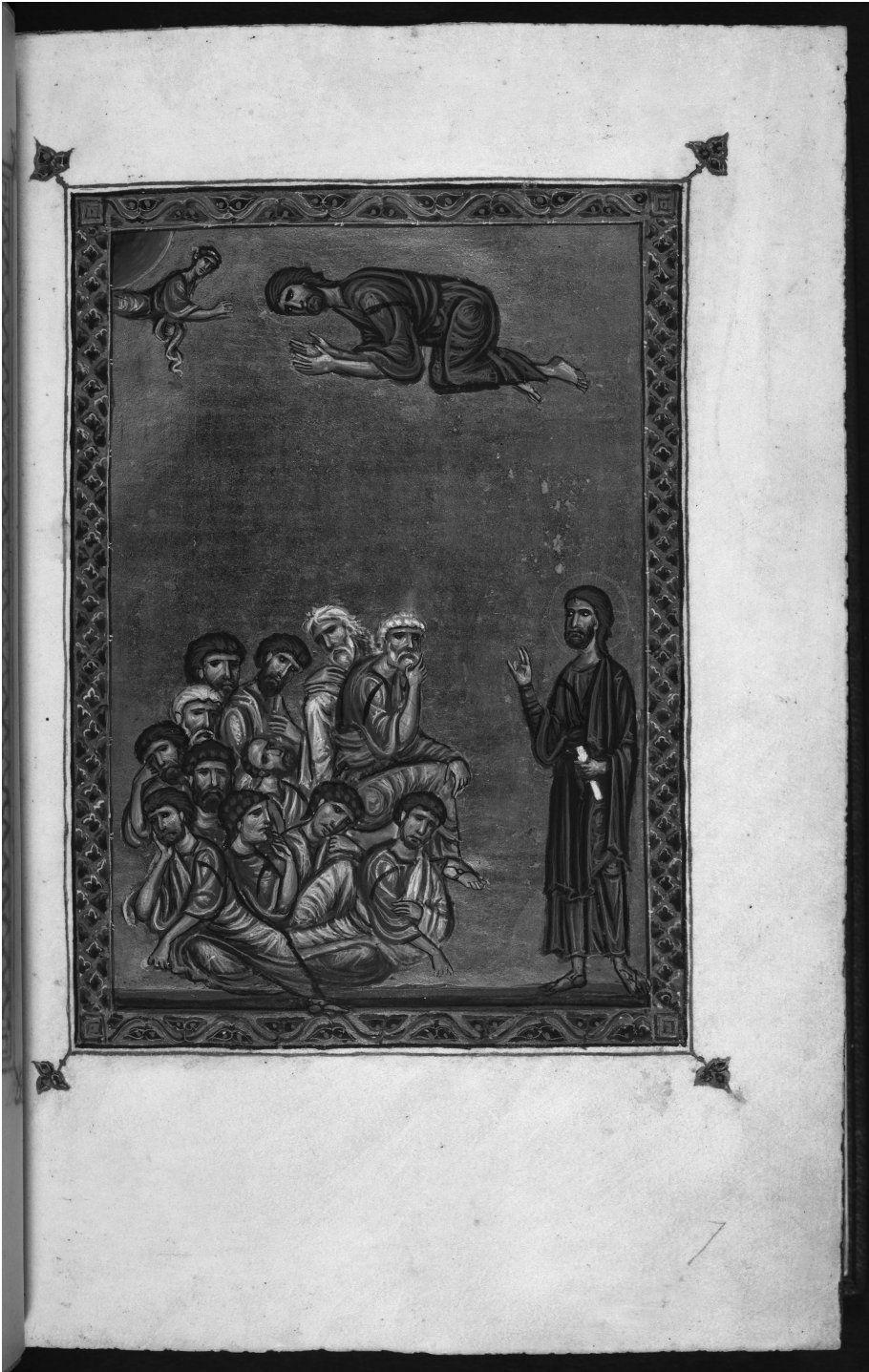


FIGURE 15.4 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 8A). Queen Melisende Psalter, f. 7r, Agony in the Garden.  
© The British Library Board, Ms. Edgerton 1139.

strands have been posited linking the icon production to the Arsenal Bible, to a workshop with Venetian connections (ca. 1258–ca. 1268), and to a more Franco-Byzantine style (Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966). For instance, the wing of a triptych juxtaposes the Coronation of the Virgin, an image common in France in the thirteenth century but unknown in Byzantium, to a perfectly legitimate Byzantine image of the Dormition of the Virgin (Weitzmann 1966, 59, figs. 16 and 17). Close scrutiny reveals several stylistic details that betray elements foreign to Byzantine art pointing to a French artist: the rolling eyes so typical of the Acre workshop, the emotional expression on the face of Christ, or the Western filling of the background and the nimbi. On the other hand, a double-sided icon of the Crucifixion and the *Anastasis* (or Harrowing of Hell) displays, according to Weitzmann, stylistic connections with an Italian/Venetian artistic milieu emphasizing linearity and patterning (Weitzmann 1963, 183–85, figs. 5–6; Weitzmann 1966, 64–65, figs. 26 and 27). Not only does the very fact that this large icon (120.5 × 67 cm) was meant to adorn an iconostasis where it would have been seen from both sides, within the framework of a thoroughly Byzantine iconography the icon displays a mixture of Byzantine forms and Western elements, like a Western propensity for realistic detail (the sole of the left foot of Adam) or the inclusion of a bejeweled cross at the hands of the resurrected Christ. Although the interaction between artists of various regional and artistic backgrounds is not well documented, the hybrid artistic products of the thirteenth century in the Holy Land suggest a direct relationship with local practices that bring together the Western and Byzantine artistic modes of expression and challenge theories of sharp doctrinal divisions.

## BYZANTINE AND WESTERN ART ON CYPRUS: A MISSING LINK?

---

No other place on the map lends itself better to exploring further the venues of communication between foreign traditions during the period of the Crusades than the island of Cyprus, which was an organic part of the Byzantine Empire until King Richard Coeur de Lion conquered it in 1191. The subsequent rule of the French royal family of the Lusignans brought to the island majestic Gothic churches, which were modeled on the Ile-de-France, for example, the Latin cathedrals of Nicosia and Famagusta as well as the Bellapais Abbey near Kyrenia. On the other hand, painting in Lusignan Cyprus remained closely connected with that of the Byzantine Empire, following the Komnenian tradition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Palaiologan models in the fourteenth century (Georgopoulou 2005; Bacci 2006).

In fact, some of the most elegant examples of Komnenian art are the wall paintings of the church of the Panagia tou Arakos at Lagoudera (1192) paid for by the local Byzantine aristocrat Leon Afthentis (Figure 15.5/Color Plate 8B). The opulence of the tall panel of the Virgin *Arakiotissa*, which is rich in blue and vermillion pigments as well as gold and

silver leaf, highlights its privileged position in the naos, while the angels holding the instruments of the Passion stress the tenderness and sorrow of the Mother who holds her reclining Son (Nicolaidès 1996, 110–11; Winfield and Winfield 2003, 244–49).

The iconographic and stylistic features of this monument were copied in Cyprus throughout the thirteenth century and are also found on icons often linked to Crusader art (Weitzmann 1966; Winfield and Winfield 2003, 320–21). In fact, studying the so-called Mellon Madonna in relation to Crusader icons produced in the Holy Land and thirteenth-century paintings from Cyprus, Jaroslav Folda has proposed a Cypriot link for several new Italian images of the thirteenth century (Folda 2002).

Another feature linking icons from Cyprus with those in southern Italy are the relief haloes made of wood or plaster. Originally thought to imitate the jeweled or enamel-decorated haloes and the metal revetments of Byzantine icons, their proliferation seems to suggest a fashion that cannot solely be attributed to lack of financial means (Eliadis 2017, 31 and 53). For instance, the majestic altarpiece of Our Lady of the Carmelites from St. Cassianos, now in the Byzantine Museum of Nicosia (Folda 1995b), would hardly qualify as a product of penury. Measuring 203 × 156 cm, this icon of the last quarter of the thirteenth century displays a raised gesso relief for the halo and other parts of the painting, while the large cloak of the Virgin of Mercy shelters a group of worshippers of the Carmelite order. This distinctive iconography of the cloak ties together the territories of Armenian Cilicia, Central Italy, and Cyprus (Carr 1995, 348). Inscribed in Latin, this image and a sister image of St. Nicholas *tēs Stegēs* at Kakopetria must have been commissioned by Western donors. Sixteen miracle scenes flank the enthroned Virgin as in Byzantine *vita* icons. In this area, where proximity aids the movement of peoples between regions, the art shows elements as diverse as Syrian features in Cyprus alongside the desire of the Lusignan kings to showcase their own identity (Carr 2009). New research and close readings of the iconography and technique of these images will surely produce concrete answers and new ideas for the movement of artists, sketchbooks, and objects.

## FURTHER DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

---

From the sixteenth century through the time of John Ruskin in the nineteenth, the understanding of Byzantine art was filtered through Italy by comparisons with Classical and Renaissance art. The recent exploration of specific encounters between the art of Byzantium and the West in Greece and the Levant have highlighted several cases that showcase the vitality, endurance, and brilliance of Byzantine art, both as a carrier of Classical forms but also as a bearer of the new Christian ideals of the Middle Ages. Since the 1990s, the paradigm of artistic influence and the search for archetypes have been replaced by a multicultural perspective that has brought Byzantine art into sharper focus as an artistic idiom that played a crucial role in shaping the visual arts of the Mediterranean region as a whole. The young field of Crusader art, the study of



FIGURE 15.5 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 8B). Virgin *Arakiotissa*, Church of the Panagia tou Arakos, Lagoudera, Cyprus. By permission of the Holy Metropolis of Morfou.

pottery produced and exchanged between East and West, but also several case studies of monuments in Norman Sicily, Frankish Greece, or Venetian-ruled territories on the Aegean islands, have brought to the fore specific artistic encounters between local Byzantine artistic idioms and the art of Italy and the Crusaders. The microhistories of the direct borrowings and blending of cultural forms based on specific objects and

focusing on particular agents of transmission such as the Mendicant orders and individual patrons or merchants will surely bring new fruitful results.

## REFERENCES

- Athanasoulis, D. 2013. "The Triangle of Power: Building Projects in the Metropolitan Area of the Crusader Principality of the Morea." In *Viewing the Morea: Land and People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 111–52 (Washington, DC).
- Bacci, M. 2006. "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the 'Nestorian' Church of Famagusta." *DChAE*, ser. IV 27: 207–220.
- Belting, H. 1994. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago).
- Buchthal, H. 1957. *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford).
- Buckton, D., and J. Osborne. 2000. "The Enamel of Doge Ordelafo Falier on the Pala d'Oro in Venice." *Gesta* 39: 43–49.
- Carr, A. W. 1995. "Byzantines and Italians on Cyprus: Images from Art." *DOP* 49: 339–57.
- Carr, A. W. 2009. "Iconography and Identity: Syrian Elements in the Art of Crusader Cyprus." *Church History and Religious Culture* 89, 1–3: 127–51.
- Corrie, R. W. 1996. "Coppo di Marcovaldo's Madonna del Bordone and the Meaning of the Bare-Legged Christ Child in Siena and the East." *Gesta* 35, 1: 43–65.
- Corrie, R. W. 2003. "The Kahn and Mellon Madonnas and Their Place in the History of the Virgin and Child Enthroned in Italy and the East." In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, edited by M. Vassilaki, 293–303 (London).
- Demus, O. 1955. "A Renaissance of Early Christian Art in 13th Century Venice." In *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend Jr.*, edited by K. Weitzmann, 348–61 (Princeton).
- Demus, O. 1975. "The Style of the Kariye Djami and Its Place in the Development of Palaeologan Art." In *The Kariye Djami*, edited by P. A. Underwood, vol. 4, 107–60 (Princeton).
- Demus, O. 1988. *The Mosaic Decoration of San Marco Venice* (1 vol. version). Edited by H. L. Kessler (Chicago).
- Derbes, A. 1998. *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (New York and Cambridge).
- Derbes, A., and A. Neff. 2004. "Italy, the Mendicant Orders and the Byzantine Sphere." In *Faith and Power*, 449–61.
- Edwards, R. 1987. *The Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia* (Washington, DC).
- Eliades, I. 2017. *Maniera Cypria. The Cypriot Painting of the 13th Century between Two Worlds* (Nicosia). Exhibition catalogue.
- Folda, J. 1995a. *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge).
- Folda, J. 1995b. "Crusader Art in the Kingdom of Cyprus, 1275–1291: Reflections on the State of the Question." In *Cyprus and the Crusades*, edited by N. Koureas and J. Riley-Smith, 209–37 (Nicosia).
- Folda, J. 1995c. "The Kahn and Mellon Madonnas: Icon or Altarpiece?" In *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, edited by C. Moss and K. Kiefer, 501–10 (Princeton).
- Folda, J. 2002. "Icon to Altarpiece in the Frankish East: Images of the Virgin and Child Enthroned." *Studies in the History of Art* 61: 122–45.
- Folda, J. 2005. *Crusader Art in the Holy Land: From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (Cambridge).

- Georgopoulou, M. 2005. "Gothic Architecture and Sculpture in Latin Greece and Cyprus." In *Byzance et l'extérieur, series Byzantina Sorbonensia*, edited by M. Balard, 21: 1–28 (Paris). *Glory of Byzantium*.
- Grabar, O. 1997. "The Shared Culture of Objects. In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by H. Maguire, 115–29 (Washington, DC).
- Herbert, L. A. 2010–2011. "Duccio's Metropolitan Madonna: Between Byzantium and the Renaissance." *Arte medievale*, 4th ser., 1: 97–119.
- Hunt, L.-A. 1991. "Art and Colonialism: The Mosaics of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (1169) and the Problem of 'Crusader' Art." *DOP* 45: 69–85.
- Jacoff, M. 1993. *The Horses of San Marco & the Quadriga of the Lord* (Princeton).
- Kennedy, H. 1994. *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge).
- Kitzinger, E. 1990. *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo* (Washington, DC).
- Krautheimer, R. 1986. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. 4th ed. with S. Ćurčić (New Haven).
- Kühnel, G. 1988. *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Berlin).
- Maguire, H., and R. S. Nelson, eds. 2010. *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice* (Washington, DC).
- Nagel, A., and C. S. Wood. 2010. *Anachronic Renaissance* (Brooklyn, NY).
- Nicol, D. M. 1998. *Byzantium and Venice. A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge).
- Nicolaidès, A. 1996. "L'église de la Panagia Arakiotissa à Lagoudéra, Chypre: Etude Iconographique des Fresques de 1192." *DOP* 50: 1–137.
- Ousterhout, R. 2003. "Architecture as Relic and the Construction of Sanctity: The Stones of the Holy Sepulchre." *JSAH* 62, 1: 4–23.
- Ousterhout, R. 2004. "The French Connection?: Construction of Vaults and Cultural Identity in Crusader Architecture." In *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades*, edited by D. Weiss and L. Mahoney, 77–94 (Baltimore).
- Perry, M. 1977. "Saint Mark's Trophies: Legend, Superstition and Archaeology in Renaissance Venice." *JWCI* 60: 27–49. Reprinted in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Horses of San Marco, Venice* (New York, 1980), 104–10 (references are to this second printing).
- Perocco, G., ed. 1984. *The Treasury of San Marco* (Venice).
- Pincus, D. 1984. "Christian Relics and the Body Politic: A Thirteenth-Century Relief Plaque in the Church of San Marco." In *Interpretazioni veneziane: Studi di Storia dell'Arte in onore di Michelangelo Muraro*, edited by D. Rosand, 39–57 (Venice).
- Pringle, D. 1993–2009. *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*. 4 vols. (Cambridge).
- Sinkević, I. 2000. *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture, Programme, Patronage*. Spätantike, frühes Christentum, Byzanz, Reihe B, Studien und Perspektiven, vol. 6 (Wiesbaden).
- Tronzo, W. 1997. "Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily: The Case of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo." In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by H. Maguire, 101–14 (Washington, DC).
- Volbach, W. F. 1969. *La stauroteca di Monopoli* (Rome).
- Weiss, D. 1992. "The Three Solomon Portraits in the Arsenal Bible and the Construction of Meaning in Crusader Painting." *Arte Medievale* 6, 2: 15–38.
- Weiss, D. 1998. *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis* (Cambridge).

- Weitzmann, K. 1963. "Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons on Mount Sinai." *AB* 45: 179–203. Reprinted in Weitzmann, *Studies in the Arts at Sinai* (Princeton 1982), 291–324.
- Weitzmann, K. 1966. "Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom." *DOP* 20: 51–83. Reprinted in Weitzmann, *Studies in the Arts at Sinai* (Princeton 1982), 325–57.
- Weitzmann, K., and H. L. Kessler. 1986. *The Cotton Genesis: British Library Codex Cotton Otho B.VI* (Princeton).
- Wilpert, J. 2007. *Roman Mosaics: Over 60 Full-Color Images from the 4th through the 13th Centuries* (Mineola, NY).
- Winfield, D., and J. Winfield. 2003. *The Church of Panaghia tou Arakos at Lagouthera, Cyprus: The Paintings and Their Painterly Significance*. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 37 (Washington, DC).
- Wolf, G. 1998. "From Mandylion to Veronica: Picturing the 'Disembodied' Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West." In *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, *Villa Spelman Studies* 6, edited by H. Kessler and G. Wolf, 153–79 (Bologna).
- Zeitler, B. 2000. "The Distorting Mirror: Reflections on the Queen Melisende Psalter." In *Through the Looking Glass: Byzantium through British Eyes*. *Papers from the Twenty-Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, London, March 1995, edited by R. Cormack and E. Jeffreys, 69–83 (London).





## CHAPTER 16

---

# SOUTH SLAVIC LANDS

---

LJUBOMIR MILANOVIĆ

## INTRODUCTION

---

A role as part of the Byzantine Commonwealth or *oecumene* did not merely mean the acceptance and adaptation of the Byzantine way of life and art, but also feeling a profound spiritual kinship with a highly prestigious culture. The reception of the legacy of Byzantium among the South Slavs, as well as the vitality and persistence of the relationship between the South Slavs and the Byzantine Empire, is best understood in regard to cultural production. Byzantine heritage deeply permeated all spheres of life—liturgy, literature, painting, music, architecture. The influence of Byzantium on the South Slavs is most evident in the domain of the Orthodox church and the universal supremacy of the emperor (Obolenski [1971] 2000, 272); however, the multilateral relations of the Southern Slavs with the empire and its heritage were complex and dynamic, subject to a changing political context.

The reception of Byzantine heritage among the South Slavs should be observed as involving the adoption of prototypes in art and architecture in building types, styles, forms, and techniques of construction and execution originating in imperial art centers (see Johnson chapter, this volume). The acceptance of the Eastern Orthodox faith enabled the spreading of Byzantine influence through liturgical rites and practices. The dominant force in the reception and adaptation of Byzantine models came from social elites, namely the Slavic rulers who sought means of increasing their economic and political power. The South Slavs advanced on the southern borders of the Roman Empire in the sixth century, settling during the early reign of the emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641). Most of the South Slavs occupied the eastern and western areas of the Balkan peninsula. Croatian and Serbian tribes inhabited the western portion along the Adriatic coast and the interior. The eastern part of the peninsula, however, was occupied by the Proto-Bulgarians who, by winning over several Slavic tribes, assimilated by adopting the Slavic language and religion (Ćirković 2004, 1–14). No contemporary sources recording the migrations of the Slavs survive. The first significant written records date from the later tenth century and appear in *De administrando imperio* by the Byzantine emperor

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, of which eight chapters are dedicated to the South Slavs (Živković 2012).

The Christianization of the South Slavs was an important process that would end at the time of the Byzantine emperor Basil I (r. 867–886) (Komatina 2014, 196–212, 272–83). The creation of more centralized states and a higher degree of social development encouraged the accelerated development of art and architecture among the South Slavs during the ninth century.

This article presents the current state of research of the reception of the Byzantine heritage in the arts and architecture of the South Slavs, focusing on the two largest medieval states in the Balkans, Bulgaria and Serbia, which largely controlled the territory of the western and eastern Balkans (present-day Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the Republic of North Macedonia) between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries.

## BULGARIA

---

### The First Bulgarian Empire (681–1018)

The formation of the First Bulgarian Empire in 681 occurred after a peace treaty with the Byzantines. The Christianization of the Bulgars in 864 under the emperor Boris I (r. 852–889) opened them to religious and cultural influences from Constantinople. Pliska became the center of Christian Bulgaria and remained the capital of the First Bulgarian Empire until 893 (Zlatarski 1927, 1–43; Komatina 2014, 196–97).

With the ascent of Simeon (r. 893–927) to the Bulgarian throne, Byzantine influence grew. The South Slavic rulers had accepted the concept of a universal empire centered in Constantinople and aspired to a role in it (Obolenski [1971] 2000, 273); Simeon was no exception. Educated in Constantinople where he spent his youth, Simeon's aspirations to the Byzantine throne are confirmed on official seals bearing his title: the emperor of Bulgarians and Rhomaioi (Nikolov 2012, 102). He was the only foreign ruler to be crowned with the Byzantine imperial diadem by the Constantinopolitan patriarch Nicholas Mystikos (Pirivatrić 1998, 34–35)—an unprecedented concession. It comes as no surprise that he located his palace in the new capital, Preslav (from 893), and had it built to resemble the Great Palace in Constantinople (Ćurčić 2010, 286).

Simeon sought not only to wield power equal to that of the Byzantine emperor, but also to create equivalent achievements in art and architecture. He probably brought artisans directly from the Byzantine capital who would later transfer their skills to local artists. These artists and craftspeople also brought concepts and architectural models with them (Ćurčić 2010, 286). This is testified to by Simeon's most important ecclesiastical commission in Preslav, the so-called Round or Golden church dating from 907.

The round plan with its twelve engaged columns flanking eight niches, a sanctuary, and three doors all point to the likely use of Byzantine prototypes such as the Chrysotriclinos (ca. 565–578), or the church of the Prophet Elijah (ninth century)—both from the Great Palace in Constantinople (see Johnson chapter, this volume). The reception of such a Constantinopolitan model is visible in the architectural sculpture as well as in the ambo, placed in the geometric center of the rotunda (Ćurčić 2010, 202; 289–90; Magdalino 2012, 3–5).

The last ruler of the First Empire, Samuel (r. 971–1014) had similar aspirations to emulate Byzantine emperors as his predecessors. He acquired for his endowment, an impressive basilica on the island of Hagios Achilleios on Lake Prespa dedicated to St. Achilleos that was built before 1000 by builders trained in the Byzantine Empire (Ćurčić 2010, 312). The basilica was planned as the patriarchal seat of Samuel's new capital. He translated the relics of St. Achilleios that had been plundered during an attack on Larissa in 985–986 (Moutsopoulos 1999). The church's use of the *cloisonné* technique masonry on the small domes over the east chapels was a well-established Byzantine building practice (Ćurčić 2010, 312).

A considerable number of ceramic tile icons dating from the ninth and tenth centuries were excavated in Preslav; these bear strong similarities to contemporary Byzantine iconographic types. These icons represent the oldest monumental icons produced by the newly Christianized South Slavs. A good example of this is the ceramic icon of St. Theodore from the National Archaeological Museum, Sofia (Totev 1999; Gerstel and Papanikola-Bakirtzi chapters, this volume).

## The Second Bulgarian Empire (1186–1394)

After almost a century and a half under Byzantine occupation, Bulgarians established the Second Bulgarian Empire and selected Veliko Turnovo as the capital city of the Asen dynasty. Turnovo would soon become not only the political and ecclesiastical seat of the restored patriarchy (1235), but also the literary and artistic center of the empire (Obolensky [1971] 2000, 241–247; Polyvianni 2000).

In addition to its role as the site of the main palace and Patriarchate's complex which included the cathedral, Turnovo became a developed urban center with a number of monasteries and residential areas (Ćurčić 2010, 473–81). The newly established Second Empire sought means to establish continuity with the traditions of the First Empire, while creating a new national identity. As was the case with his predecessor, Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Asen II (r. 1218–1241) used Byzantine political as well as cultural models and formulae to express his power and the strength of his country. Asen also assumed the title of the emperor of Bulgarians and Greeks (Boeck 2015, 55). One of the most important monasteries in Turnovo, the Great Lavra of the Forty Martyrs, was his donation, founded to celebrate victory over Theodore Komnenos Doukas at Klokotnitsa in 1230. The main church within the monastery is based on the Byzantine three-aisled

basilica with three semicircular apses on the east side. The south aisle of the basilica served as a mausoleum for the imperial family. Though he fought against the Byzantine Empire, or what was left of it after the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, for Asen Byzantium still served as a major source of artistic models (Popov 1985; Ćurčić 2001, 58–60).

Asen's pursuit of a universal empire with Constantinople as its center indicates his emulation of Byzantine models of imperial power. This is demonstrated by his portrait excavated on the site of the Church of the Forty Martyrs. Fragments include portions of his beard and face including traces of hair and a Byzantine crown of the *kemelaukion* type suggesting an imperial portrait (Koseva-Toteva 2016, 89–100).

The Bulgarian nobility would replicate their ruler's appropriation of Byzantine models for their endowments. The church of Sts. Nicholas and Panteleimon at Boiana, next to the city of Sofia, contains the most important painting of the thirteenth century in Bulgaria. Before 1259, the church was renovated and new monumental paintings were commissioned by the Bulgarian aristocrat and sebastokrator Kaloian and his wife Desislava (Figure 16.1), during the reign of the Tsar Constantine Tich Asen (r. 1257–1277) (Pirivatrić 2011, 16–37).

Byzantine influence is clearly visible in the selection of the images represented. A portrait of Christ Chalkitēs is located next to the ruling portraits of the Constantine Tich and his wife Irena Lascaris, who are dressed in imperial gowns. The representation of Christ Chalkitēs on the south wall next to the entrance to the naos is an explicit reference to the one over the main ceremonial entrance to the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors in Constantinople (Balakova 1995, 19; Schroeder 2010, 104, 110). Further recontextualization of Constantinopolitan models may be identified in the depiction of the image of the Virgin Mary with Child above the entrance to the naos that can be linked to the Constantinopolitan icon of the Theotokos Evergetis (Penkova 2000, 671–72).

The impact of Byzantine models in Bulgarian culture, however, is best seen in art produced under the rulership of Tsar Ivan Alexander (r. 1331–1371). Following his predecessors, he “embraced the Orthodox model of empire and designated himself as its true successor through patronage that insisted on the removal of the eternal empire (*renovatio*) and its transfer to Bulgaria (*translatio imperii*)” (Boeck 2015, 51). He titled himself “Yoan by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ Tsar and Autocrator of the Bulgarians and the Romei (Greeks) Alexander” (Bakalova 1986, 33). Ivan Alexander appropriated Byzantine imperial models to aid in establishing his authority. His status as a “New Constantine” was underscored by placing his imperial portrait across from the fresco of Sts. Constantine and Helen in the ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery (Bakalova 1986, 32–36). The imperial portrait of Ivan Alexander, representing the divine investiture, the most vivid attempt to link the earthly and heavenly ruler, would appear in the Vatican Manasses (Vat. Slav. 2, fol. 1v), a manuscript commissioned by the tsar (Bakalova 2011, 71–86). Here, Alexander fully dressed in an imperial gown is depicted being crowned by an angel descending



FIGURE 16.1. Portrait of sebastokrator Kaloian and his wife Desislava, before 1259, Church of St. Nicholas at Boiana, Sofia, Bulgaria, north wall of the narthex. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović.

from a segment of sky. Alexander ordered the translation of the twelfth-century chronicle of Constantine Manasses into Slavic, and its rich illustrations included scenes from Bulgarian history. This served to confirm *translatio imperio* and his desire to be recognized as Tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks (Boeck 2015, 51–87).

The revival of humanism and the monastic movement of *hesychasm* that originated at Mt. Athos was heavily supported by Ivan Alexander (Angelov 1989, 41–61). The best example of the collision of the two opposing ideological currents of the

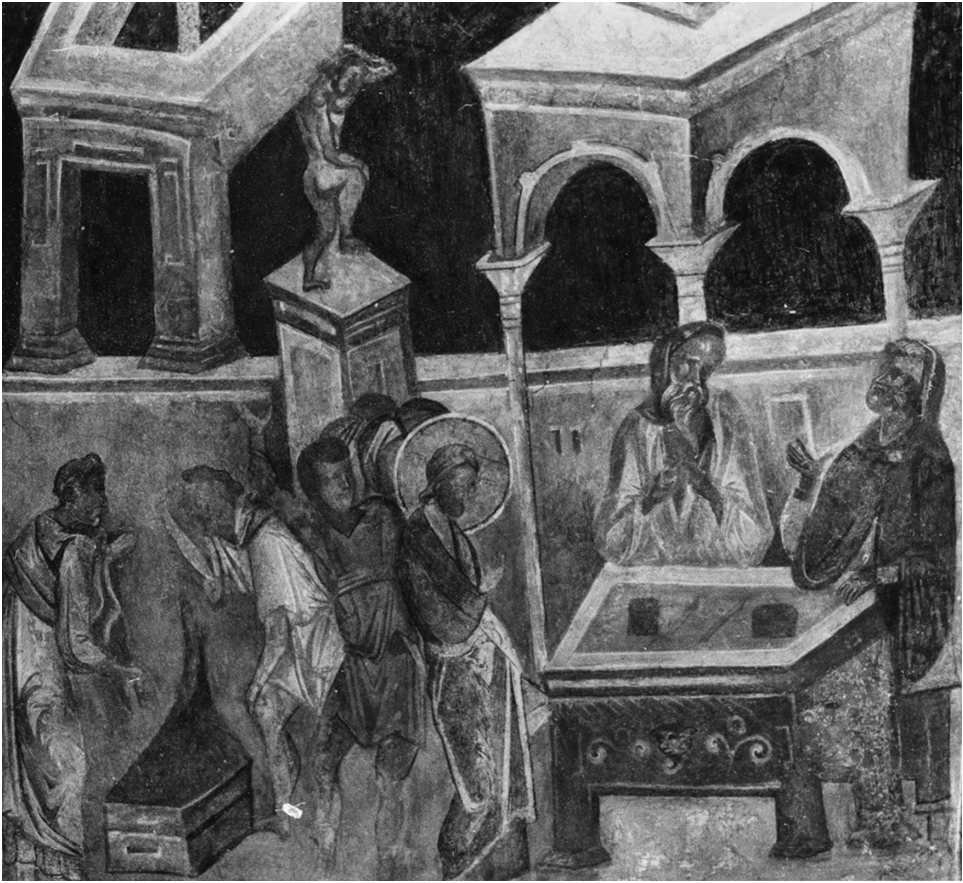


FIGURE 16.2. Christ before Annas and Caiaphas, detail, fourteenth century, The Rock-Hewn Church, Ivanovo, Bulgaria. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović.

hesychastic theological movement and the revival of humanism found in Palaiologan art is preserved in the frescoes found in the rock-hewn church in Ivanovo. These works reveal an increase of dramatic expression and strong realism. Moreover, the characteristics of Palaiologan art of the second half of the fourteenth century evident at Ivanovo are the elegant and decorative effects and rich and refined colors (Figure 16.2). The return of antiquity and the interest in the human body are evident in the numerous depictions of naked bodies that reveal a newfound interest in anatomy and musculature (Strezova 2014).

By commissioning objects that were influenced by Byzantine contemporary art, the South Slavic royal families, aristocrats, and monastic communities emphasized their own power to produce works of art of the highest quality, and thereby confirm their place in the Byzantine oecumene.

## SERBIA

### The Beginning (Ninth–Eleventh Century)

The Christianization of the Serbs grew particularly conspicuous in the ninth century when the rulers adopted Christian names (Maksimović 1996, 155–73). At this time, Serbs occupied several coastal principalities and the area then referred to as “Baptized Serbia,” which was later divided into Raška and Bosnia (Ćirković 2004, 12). Unfortunately, relatively few objects from this period have been preserved that might provide a context for the reception of Byzantine models.

The architecture of the time is marked by a mixture of types resulting from the interweaving of Byzantine and Western, pre-Romanesque influences. Byzantine artistic trends arrived indirectly, through towns on the Adriatic coast that were still under Byzantine control. While the church interior space was predominately of Byzantine origin and concept, the façade was mainly executed in the pre-Romanesque style. The Church of St. Peter in Ras is good example of this combination. Erected in the ninth century, this church was completed and painted during the reign of Prince Petar Gojniković (r. 892–918), when it became the episcopal seat. From the exterior, the core of the church presents itself as a rotunda with a dome. Upon entry, however, the interior reveals itself to be divided into four conches. The façade is constructed of a combination of sandstone and travertine. For the origin of its plan, one should look to the churches of the Byzantine capital, such as the rotunda-martyrium of Sts. Karpos and Papylos or the Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (ca. 527–536), which was restored during the time of the emperor Basil I (Popović 2000, 210–18; Marković 2016, 147–49). Major edifices in this period were constructed by local builders following designs generated in imperial workshops (Ćurčić 2010, 343).

The renewal of Byzantine power under the emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025) over most of the Balkan peninsula, as well as the rise of the principality of Duklja, provided new momentum in Serbian art (Marković 2016, 153–55). The most common church design of this period is a type of small single-aisled church, which might have a dome or not (Djurić 1981, 236; Ćurčić 2010, 459). The fragmentary examples of painting of the early period that have come down to us provide some insight into the Serbian reception of Byzantine art. In the church of St. Nicholas on the island Koločep (Croatia), frescoes dating from the eleventh century show some characteristic features of Byzantine art, especially in their depiction of the archangel’s clothing and saints’ heads (Figure 16.3).

In the church of St. Thomas in Kuti (Montenegro) from the same period, modeling of the faces of the saints resembles those from the crypt of the main church of the monastery of Hosios Loukas in the Greek province of Phokis. Based on these stylistic characteristics, one should not exclude the possibility of the involvement of Greek masters at these two churches (Pušić 1986, 77–78; Peković 2008, 23–37; Marković 2016, 161–63).





**FIGURE 16.3.** Archangel Michael, fresco, eleventh century, Church of St. Nicholas, Koločep Island, Croatia. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović.

### **The Turning Point (Twelfth–Thirteenth Century)**

Changing political circumstances in Raška in the second half of the twelfth century—namely, the consolidation of the borders and rise of a new Nemanjić dynasty led by its founder, Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja (r. 1166–1196)—hastened the development of art

and literacy among the Serbs (Ćirković 2004, 31–33). The centralization of the country and the establishment of close connections with the Byzantine court opened the way for the appropriation of Byzantine art and architecture. The Nemanjas' strong ties with Constantinople and the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–1180) is reflected in his first endowment, the Church of St. Nicholas near Kuršumljica, ca. 1166–1168 (Ćurčić 2010, 492–93). The plan of the church is an atrophied Greek-cross with a dome, narthex, and *parekklesion* on the south side. The interior of the dome is ribbed and the drum has eight windows. The church was built of brick using the so-called recessed brick technique. St. Nicholas is definitively the work of Constantinopolitan design and construction. The presence of builders from the capital would certainly not be possible without the involvement of the Byzantine emperor. In the later period a twin-towered portico was added. There are indications that Nemanja added only the portico to a pre-existing church, which was possibly a foundation of a high-ranking Byzantine official or the perhaps the emperor himself (Ćurčić 2010, 492; Mihaljević 2012, 99–104). The church of St. Nicholas was a benchmark within the development of ecclesiastical architecture during this period and, therefore, a crucial source for the subsequent dissemination of Byzantine influence within Serbia.

Serbian rulers had an ambivalent relationship with Byzantium. On the one hand, they struggled to spread their dominion over Byzantine territories and were often at war with the empire; on the other hand, they tacitly acknowledged the greater sophistication of Byzantine artistic production through their cultural appropriation. This ambivalence may be detected in most of the Nemanjić endowments; layouts and monumental painting in these are indebted to Byzantine models, while their façades and decorations remained Romanesque. This mix of influences is most clearly evident in Nemanja's last and most important building project, the Church of the Mother of God Evergetis of the Studenica Monastery; it would serve as his mausoleum and become the prototype for many other Serbian rulers' foundations. The dedication of the church to the Theotokos Evergetis echoes the Constantinopolitan monastery of the Virgin Evergetis (Živković 2016, 193). The church plan of an atrophied Greek-cross resembles Nemanja's church of St. Nicholas with some modification of the plan. A twelve-sided dome rises above the central bay. The façade of the church is entirely covered with marble and enriched with Romanesque sculptural decoration.

Future research may also reveal a link to Constantinopolitan churches with marble revetment such as Hagia Sophia or the Virgin of Pharos (Erdeljan 2011, 99–100). Two master builders were involved in the execution of the church; one, a Westerner, for the principal core of the building, and another, probably from Byzantium, for the dome. The twelve-side scalloped interior of the dome, both in its design and its manner of construction, are of Constantinopolitan origin (Ćurčić 2010, 496–97; Mihaljević 2012, 114). The central position of the main *katholikon* in the cenobitic Studenica Monastery originated in Byzantine monastic planning. In contrast to the more rectilinear plan prevalent in Byzantium; however, Serbian monasteries took a more circular form (Popović 1994, 51–52).

The beginning of the thirteenth century marked the flowering of Serbian art when Serbia gained political and church independence and greater economic strength (Pirivatrić 2019, 107–42). Taking the Studenica katholikon as a prototype, most of thirteenth-century Serbian churches would, by and large, echo its structural and decorative system. Changing liturgical needs would lead to modifications that included the addition of side *parekklesia* flanking the main building, the extension of the apsidal space, and the extension of the exonarthex with a *katihumena* on the upper floor. These changes began in the Church of the Holy Savior at Žiča completed in 1221 (Babić 1969; Ćurčić 2000, 83–93; Čanak- Medić, Vojvodić, and Popović 2014, 128).

Thematic programs of Serbian churches mostly followed the main streams of contemporary Byzantine art modified by the needs and aspirations of local patrons (Pavlović 2016, 256). The first major undertaking in the thirteenth century was the painting of the katholikon of the Studenica Monastery, ca. 1208–1209. The quality of the painting suggests the involvement of a leading artist from Constantinople or Thessaloniki. The presence of a Greek artist is testified to by a signature in Greek in the form of a prayer beneath the image of the *Mandyllion* in the drum of the dome (Todić 2016, 217; Živković 2016, 202–6). The paintings at Studenica signal a departure from the so-called Komnenian style with figures displaying abrupt, dramatic gestures to convey vivid expression. In Studenica, the figures are refined and calm, with an introspective appearance. The painter used a gold leaf background in certain areas of the church, likely in an attempt to emulate the Byzantine mosaic technique. Sava Nemanjić, the first Serbian archbishop (from 1219), was the creator not only of the Studenica iconographic program, but also that of another royal endowment, the katholikon of the Mileševa Monastery, which was executed by the best painters from Thessaloniki (see Gerstel chapter, this volume). With his close ties to Constantinople and Thessaloniki, Sava was well aware of contemporary trends in Byzantine art of the thirteenth century (Babić 1981, 31–42; Todić 2016, 214–20). By bringing artists from Byzantium and appropriating its stylistic and aesthetic qualities in the royal endowments, he hoped to increase the power of the dynasty and demonstrate that Serbia was part of the Byzantine cultural realm.

Territorial and economic expansion during the last quarter of the century lent new momentum to artistic developments in Serbia. King Stefan Uroš I (r. 1243–1276) invited the best Constantinopolitan painters for his foundation, the Trinity Church in the Sopoćani Monastery (Djurić [1963] 1991). The paintings produced between 1272 and 1276 represent the peak of Serbian and Byzantine art of the period. To demonstrate his ability to bring the best artists from Byzantium, he commissioned stucco decoration for the church and had portions of the walls covered using a faux-mosaic technique featuring gold leaf and painted lines imitating tesserae. The exceptional colors, the massive sculptural forms of the figures, and the well-balanced, monumental compositions reveal the influence of Greek artists (Figure 16.4) (Djurić [1963] 1991, 43–88; Todić 2016, 226–27).



FIGURE 16.4. The Church of the Holy Trinity, interior, western view showing the Dormition of the Virgin, 1272–1276, Sopoćani Monastery, Serbia. Photo: Ljubomir Milanović.

## Summit and Decline of Art (Fourteenth–Fifteenth Century)

Serbia expanded southward, occupying areas and cities that were previously under the direct control of Byzantium, during the reign of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (r. 1282–1321). This expansion would continue during the rule of his son Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (r. 1321–1331) and grandson Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (r. 1331–1355, emperor from 1345, crowned in 1346). This process accelerated the Byzantinization of the Serbian state and society. The Serbian royal family accepted models of Byzantine court ceremony, dress, palace decoration, and architectural and artistic trends generally (Krsmanović and Maksimović 2016, 52–55).

The most significant impact occurred in the field of architecture. King Milutin, a Byzantine son-in-law and member of the family of the emperor Andronikos II (r. 1282–1328) from 1299, had access to the best master builders of the empire and was in direct contact with contemporary trends of Byzantine art during the revival of art under the Palaiologan dynasty, or what is referred to as the Palaiologan Renaissance (Vojvodić 2016, 271). The first endowments of King Milutin date from 1299 and indicate a significant change in style and construction. He rebuilt the katholikon of Hilandar Monastery

at Mt. Athos around 1303 as a cross-in-square church with lateral conches and a twelve-sided, internally scalloped dome of Constantinopolitan type. The façade was built in a cloisonné technique of bricks framing each of the stone blocks. Byzantine influence is also visible in the close relation between the articulation of the façade and the internal structural system (Ćurčić 2010, 655). King Milutin built single-aisled, domed churches such as St. Niketas near Skopje and the churches of Sts. Joachim and Anna at the monastery of Studenica. Two of his five-domed, cross-in-square churches—the church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša in Prizren, and one dedicated to St. George in Staro Nagoričino—have close parallels with the architecture of Epiros (Ćurčić 2010, 636, 663–66). The peak of Byzantine and Serbian architecture and king Milutin's patronage arrived with construction of the five-domed cross-in-square church of the Gračanica Monastery in 1320–1321 (Figure 16.5). Externally and internally the building gives a sense of harmony, symmetry, and monumentality (Ćurčić 1979).

Beginning with Milutin, wall painting, especially in royal endowments, followed contemporary trends of Byzantine art (Todić 1999). For his foundations, King Milutin hired educated painters from the Thessaloniki family of Astrapas, namely Michael and Eutychios (Marković 2010, 9–34 and Gerstel chapter, this volume). They painted in the style developed during the Palaiologan dynasty, which was characterized by the inclusion of more scenes in cycles, as well as a greater number of figures. At this time, painters started using inverse perspective; architectural backgrounds became



FIGURE 16.5. The Church of the Annunciation, southern exterior view, ca. 1321, Gračanica Monastery, Serbia. Photo: Nebojša Stanković.

more three-dimensional. For painters in particular, antiquity was a source of canons of proportions for the human body as well as architectural elements. Antique sources were also used to expand the vocabulary of visual metaphors and personifications. In addition to the traditional, pan-Christian saints who continued to be depicted, new cults emerged during the fourteenth century. These were most likely spread by Byzantine painters from their native land; one example is the cult of St. Eustathios of Thessaloniki (Marković 2010, 283–94; Milanović and Preradović 2016). Many of these trends are visible in the most successful examples of the mature style of Serbian Palaiologan art such as the painting of the Mother of God of Ljeviša, the church of Joachim and Anna in Studenica, and the katholikon of Gračanica Monastery (Todić 1999).

The reception of the Byzantine legacy and Byzantine imperial ideology is best represented in royal portraits. Starting with King Milutin, all members of the royal family were represented in triumphal poses while dressed in imperial clothes bearing insignia. Cast as divine messengers on earth, they are painted being crowned by angels or Christ himself in a divine investiture. By juxtaposing these commissioned portraits with images of Sts. Constantine and Helen, the royal family cast themselves in the role of “New Constantines” with a concomitant claim to universal rule. They received heavenly validation in form of the divine investiture. The culmination of this newly adopted, Byzantine imperial ideology is best depicted in the royal portrait from Gračanica where angels, as Christ’s messengers, bring crowns to the “New Constantine,” King Milutin, and his wife, the Byzantine princess Simonis (Marjanović-Dušanić and Vojvodić 2016, 299–315).

The development of painting under the influence of the mature Palaiologan Renaissance would continue under Milutin’s heirs who commissioned large encyclopedic cycles, such as those in the Dečani and Matejič Monasteries (Dimitrova 2002; Todić and Čanak-Medić 2013). A newly emergent aristocratic class grew more dominant and, in an attempt to emulate their rulers, began to commission churches and works of art. Single-naved, or cross-in-square, domed churches constructed by Byzantine- or Byzantine-trained builders were popular with aristocratic patrons (Čurčić 2010, 636–41, 668–70). Although they continued to follow trends in style and program of Byzantine art of the period, the monumental painting that accompanied these endowments showed a significant decline in quality (Djordjević 1994).

Following the Battle at the Maritsa River in 1371 and the death of the last Serbian emperor, Stefan Uroš V (r. 1355–1371), in the same year two separate states were formed and ruled by the Hrebeljanović and Branković families, respectively. The two domains were reunited in 1412 under the rule of Despot Stefan Lazarević (r. 1402–1427). During this period, new urban centers were established and Kruševac, Belgrade, and Smederevo became capitals (Čurčić 2010, 628–30, 650–52). Despot Stefan’s capital, Belgrade, was embellished with new relics, such as that of St. Theophano. This helped establish a strong link between Belgrade and the Byzantine capital where she was highly venerated (Marjanović-Dušanić 2006, 90–92). Belgrade was equated with the New Jerusalem and, like Constantinople, placed under the protection of the Virgin Mary (Edeljan 2006, 97–110)

Although the territory under Serbian control diminished rapidly, the production of art and architecture intensified. Church design continued to follow single-aisled or cross-in-square Constantinopolitan types with lateral conches. Church façades were richly decorated with low-relief painted sculptural elements displaying geometric, floral and rosette designs, or with animals and mythical creatures. The use of alternating bands of brick and stone were of a Constantinopolitan type (Ćurčić 2010, 671–82). Contemporary monumental church painting grew more decorative in style with the adoption of gold and multicolored bands used to separate scenes. The latter were executed in the manner of Late Byzantine paintings that originated in Thessaloniki. Examples include the mausoleum of Prince Lazar, the church of Ascension, at the Ravanica Monastery in the mid- to late-1370s; and the later funerary church of his son Despot Stefan Lazarević, the Church of the Holy Trinity at Manasija Monastery, built between 1407–1418 (Starodubcev 2016). The Serbs would come under Ottoman control in 1459 after the reign of Despot Lazar Branković, whose rule marked the end of the golden age of artistic production in Serbia.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

---

The development of the states occupied by the South Slavs took different forms in relation to local circumstances, but all reveal Byzantine influence. The appropriation of Byzantine heritage was enabled by a long border with the Byzantine Empire and the acceptance of the Eastern Orthodox faith. The phenomenon of the reception of Byzantine art and architecture by the South Slavs is most clearly discerned by examining the patronage of the ruling class, nobles, and prelates. These social strata were the first to accept Christianity and had the means and ambition to emulate the Byzantine way of life.

This article has attempted to address all the relevant monuments commissioned by members of South Slavs and influenced by Byzantium. The issue of the reception of foreign influences, however, is always open to questions of social and ethnic identity that challenge any interpretation of medieval art relying upon rigid national categories. Art production among South Slavs should be understood as a complex phenomenon that combined Byzantine traditions and skills in response to the specific demands of domestic patrons. Though strongly influenced by Byzantine heritage, the art of the South Slavs should not be viewed as homogenous; rather, Byzantine influence should be seen as one among several forces that shaped the essentially heterogenous art production of this region.

## REFERENCES

---

- Angelov, D. 1989. "Hesy chasm in Medieval Bulgaria." *Bulgarian Historical Review* 14, 3: 41–61.  
Babić, G. 1969. *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques* (Paris).

- Babić, G. 1981. "Les plus anciennes fresques de Studenica (1208/9)." In *Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'études byzantines* II-A, 31–42 (Athens).
- Bakalova, E. 1986. "Society and Art in Bulgaria in the 14th Century." *Byzantinobulgarica* 8: 17–73.
- Bakalova, E. 1995. "Za konstantinopolskite modeli v Boianskata tsurkva." *Problemi na izkustvoto* 1995, 1: 10–21.
- Bakalova, E. 2011. "The Perfect Ruler in the Art and Literature of Medieval Bulgaria." *Studia Ceranea* 1: 71–86.
- Boeck, E. 2015. *Imagining the Byzantine Past. The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscript of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge).
- Čanak Medić, M., D. Vojvodić, and D. Popović. 2014. *Manastir Žiča* (Belgrade).
- Ćirković, M. S. 2004. *The Serbs* (Belgrade).
- Ćurčić, S. 1979. *Gračanica: King Milutin's Church and Its Place in Late Byzantine Architecture* (University Park, PA, and London).
- Ćurčić, S. 2000. "Smisao i funkcija *katihumena* u poznovizantijskoj i srpskoj arhitekturi." In *Manastir Žiča: Zbornik radova*, 83–93 (Kraljevo).
- Ćurčić, S. 2001. "Function and Form. Church Architecture in Bulgaria, 4th–19th Centuries." In *Treasures of Christian Art in Bulgaria*, edited by V. Pace, 44–66 (Sofia).
- Ćurčić, S. 2010. *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven).
- Dimitrova, E. 2002. *Manastir Matejče* (Skopje).
- Djordjević, I. 1994. *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele u doba Nemanjića* (Belgrade).
- Djurić, V. J. 1963, 1991. *Sopoćani* (Belgrade).
- Djurić, V. J. 1981. "Počeci umetnosti kod Srba." In *Istorija srpskog naroda* I, edited by S. Ćirković, 230–51 (Belgrade).
- Erdeljan, J. 2006. "Beograd kao Novi Jerusalem: Razmišljanja o recepciji jednog toposa u doba despota Stefana Lazarevića." *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 43: 97–110.
- Erdeljan, J. 2011. "Studenica: All Things Constantinopolitan." In *ΣΥΜΕΙΚΤΑ. Zbornik radova povodom četrdeset godina Instituta za istoriju umetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu*, edited by I. Stevović, 93–101 (Belgrade).
- Komatina, P. 2014. *Crkvena politika Vizantije od kraja ikonoborstva do smrti cara Vasilija I* (Belgrade).
- Koseva-Toteva, D. 2016. *Mural Paintings of the Archeological Excavations from the Medieval Bulgarian Metropolis Turnovo* (Veliko Turnovo).
- Krsmanović B., and Lj. Maksimović. 2016. "Byzantium in Serbia—Serbian Authenticity and Byzantine Influence." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 41–55 (Belgrade).
- Magdalino, P. 2012. "The Byzantine Antecedents of the Round Church at Preslav." *Problemi na izkustvoto* 2012, 2: 3–4.
- Maksimović, Lj. 1996. "Pokrštavanje Srba i Hrvata." *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 35: 155–73.
- Marjanović-Dušanić, S. 2006. "Dinastija i svetost u doba porodice Lazarević." *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 43: 77–95.
- Marjanović-Dušanić, S., and D. Vojvodić. 2016. "The Model of Empire—The Idea and Image of Authority in Serbia (1299–1371)." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 299–315 (Belgrade).



- Marković, M. 2010. "The Painter Eutychios—Father of Michael Astrapas and Protomaster of the Frescoes in the Church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ochrid." *Zbornik Matice Srpske za Likovne Umetnosti* 38: 9–34.
- Marković, M. 2010. "Kult i ikonografija svetog Evstatija Solunskog u srednjem veku." *Niš i Vizantija* 8: 283–94.
- Marković, M. 2016. "Beginnings of Artistic Activity in the Serbian Lands (9th–11th century)." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 147–63 (Belgrade).
- Mihaljević, M. 2012. "Change in Byzantine Architecture." In *Approaches to Byzantine Architecture and Its Decoration* Studies in Honor of Slobodan Ćurčić, edited by M. J. Johnson, R. Ousterhout, and A. Papalexandrou, 99–119 (Farnham).
- Milanović, Lj., and D. Preradović. 2016. "Pan-Christian Saints in Serbian Cult Practice and Art." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 103–17 (Belgrade).
- Moutsopoulos N. 1999. *Ἡ βασιλική τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀχιλλείου στήν Πρέσπα* (Thessaloniki).
- Nikolov, A. 2012. "Making a New Basileus: The Case of Symeon of Bulgaria (893–927) Reconsidered." In *Rome, Constantinople and Newly Converted Europe. Archeological and Historical Evidence*, vol. 1, edited by M. Salamon, M. Woloszyn, A. Musin, and P. Špeher, 101–9 (Kraków, Leipzig, Rzeszów, and Warsaw).
- Obolensky, D. 1971, 2000. *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500–1453* (London).
- Pavlović, D. 2016. "Thematic Programmes of Serbian Monumental Painting." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 249–59 (Belgrade).
- Peković, Ž. 2008. *Quattro chiese della isole Elafite* (Dubrovnik and Split).
- Penkova, B. 2000. "Bogoroditsa s Mladenetsa ot Boianskata tsurkva (edna hipoteza)." In *Osam vekova Hilandara: Istorija, duhovni život, umetnost i arhitektura*, edited by V. Korać, 667–73 (Belgrade).
- Pirivatrić, S. 1998. *Samuilova država* (Belgrade).
- Pirivatrić, S. 2011. "The Boyana Church Portraits: A Contribution to the Prosopography of Sebastokrator Kaloyan." In *The Boyana Church between the East and the West in the Art of the Christian Europe*, 15–37 (Sofia).
- Pirivatrić, S. 2019. "Križa vizantijskog sveta i postanak kraljevstva i autokefalne arhiepiskopije svih srpskih i pomorskih zemalja." In *Kraljevstvo i arhiepiskopija u srpskim i pomorskim zemljama Nemanjića*, edited by Lj. Maksimović and S. Pirivatrić, 107–42 (Belgrade).
- Polyvianni, I. D. 2000. *Kul'turnoe svoeobrazie srednevekovi Bolgarii v kontekste vizantijsko-slavianskoi obshchnosti IX–XV vekov* (Ivanovo).
- Popov, A. 1985. *T'rnovska Velika Lavra* (Sofia).
- Popović, S. 1994. *Krst u krugu: Arhitektura manastira u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji* (Belgrade).
- Popović, S. 2000. "Preispitivanje crkve Svetog Petra u Rasu." In *Stefan Nemanja—Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi: Istorija i predanje*, edited by J. Kalić, 209–29 (Belgrade).
- Pušić, I. 1986. "Crkva Sv. Tome u Kutima." *Zograf* 17: 73–78.
- Schroeder, R. 2010. "Transformative Narratives and Shifting Identities in the Narthex of the Boiana Church." *DOP* 64: 103–28.
- Starodubcev, T. 2016. *Srpsko zidno slikarstvo u zemljama Lazarevića i Brankovića* (Belgrade).
- Strezova, A. 2014. *Hesychasm and Art: The Appearance of New Iconographic Trends in Byzantine and Slavic Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries* (Canberra).
- Todić, B. 1999. *Serbian Medieval Painting: The Age of King Milutin* (Belgrade).

- Todić, B. 2106. "Serbian Monumental Art of the 13th Century." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 213–31 (Belgrade).
- Todić, B., and M. Čanak-Medić. 2013. *The Dečani Monastery* (Belgrade).
- Totev, T. 1999. *The Ceramic Icon in Medieval Bulgaria* (Sofia).
- Vojvodić, D. 2016. "Serbian Art from the Beginning of the 14th Century till the Fall of the Nemanjic State." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 271–97 (Belgrade).
- Zlatarski N. V. 1927. *Istoriia na bŭlgarskata dŭrzhava prez srednite vekove* (Sofia).
- Živković, M. 2016. "Studena: The Funerary Church of the Dynastic Founder—The Cornerstone of Church and State Independence." In *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art, Sacral Arts of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages*, edited by D. Popović and D. Vojvodić, 193–209 (Belgrade).
- Živković, T. 2012. *De Conversione Croatorum et Serborum: A Lost Source* (Belgrade)



---

*After the Fall*

---



## CHAPTER 17

.....

# “BYZANCE APRÈS BYZANCE” AND POST-BYZANTINE ART FROM THE LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY THROUGH THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

.....

HENRY D. SCHILB

ALTHOUGH the history of post-Byzantine art is considered a field of study in its own right (Ćurčić 2013), the meaning of the term *post-Byzantine* and the scope of the field have been questioned in recent years. While many scholars have critiqued the term, with some attempting to define or redefine it (Gratziou 2005; Spratt 2012; Gratziou 2013) and others resisting the artificial tidiness of such definitions (Safran 2012), students approaching the field for the first time may still find the concept of the post-Byzantine insufficiently theorized. The historiography of *Byzantium after Byzantium* and *post-Byzantine* art is also troubled by nationalist underpinnings, among other problems, and it is likely that the historiography of the field would prove more interesting and revealing than further attempts to define precisely what the term *post-Byzantine* actually means. Even an apparently straightforward definition can prove unhelpful. The Getty Research Institute’s “Art & Archaeology Thesaurus Online” quite reasonably defines *post-Byzantine* as “art produced by Orthodox Christians living in lands once part of the Byzantine empire” (Getty Research Institute 2017), but we can quickly identify one or two possibly unavoidable flaws in such a definition. This definition does not reflect the reality of art historical practice, which tends to focus on specific regions, or even specific modern nations, rather than former Byzantine territory or the Orthodox Christian world generally. Accounts of the post-Byzantine world—at least the Greek part—typically distinguish between Ottoman-held territories and Venetian-held territories (Kitromilides and Arvanitakes 2008; Spratt 2012), but if the concept applies only to former Byzantine territory, what are we to make of the art of Orthodox Christians outside those lands? Is it

necessary for post-Byzantine art to have been made by Orthodox Christians, or within former Byzantine territory, or is it sufficient that it simply looks “Byzantine”? The term also suggests a beginning in time, but when does post-Byzantine end, or did it end at all (see Bullen chapter, this volume)? Is the chronological range the same across the geographical range? What makes something post-Byzantine rather than simply Byzantine or, less simply, Byzantinizing?

It may be that the self-marginalizing term *post-Byzantine* represents the greatest obstacle to studying post-Byzantine art. It really only indicates some period after “Byzantium,” a word that has itself always been slippery and contentious. Both terms, *Byzantine* and *post-Byzantine*, and the concepts attached to them have attracted increasingly probing scholarly attention (Ćurčić 2008; Cameron 2014; Nilsson and Stephenson 2014). Even if some scholars recognize the artificial Byzantine/post-Byzantine binary as a legacy of the Enlightenment (Safran 2012, 500), the taxonomical utility of the term *post-Byzantine* continues to prove irresistible to others (Spratt 2012). The English term *post-Byzantine* directly translates the Greek word, as do the analogous words in German and French, but the meaning of post-Byzantine in English has changed somewhat since the nineteenth century. For example, in his *Peloponnesus* of 1858, William George Clark described the castle at Argos as post-Byzantine (Clark 1858, 92). In context, it seems that what Clark meant was either simply the period after the Fourth Crusade or, more specifically, the period of Frankish control of Argos after the Fourth Crusade and up to the period of Venetian rule (1204–1388). Either way, Clark’s use of post-Byzantine does not correspond precisely to uses of the term familiar in the twenty-first century.

By 1935, the year of the exhibition *La Peinture religieuse grecque post-byzantine et néo-hellénistique* at the Galerie Saint-François in Lyon, the term *post-Byzantine* had come to mean, more or less, what it usually means to art historians now (*La Peinture religieuse grecque post-byzantine et néo-hellénistique* 1935). That was also the year that Nicolae Iorga published his book *Byzance après Byzance*, in which he elaborated his theory of Byzantium after Byzantium (Iorga 1935). The phrase “Byzance après Byzance” has come to be used nearly interchangeably with the term *post-Byzantine* (for example, Triantaphyllopoulos 2002, 3), and Iorga’s book has been regarded as galvanizing post-Byzantine studies, endowing the field with a new legitimacy (Kitromilides 1995, 9). Iorga’s phrase “Byzantium after Byzantium” has even been cited as the origin of the term *post-Byzantine* (Ćurčić 2013), but the term predates Iorga’s book. It is possible to recognize a distinction between the post-Byzantine period, understood broadly, and *Byzance après Byzance*, understood as specifically describing the situation in Balkan lands under Ottoman rule (Ćurčić 1988, 60). While it is possible to identify a precedent in Greek nationalism (Kitromilides 1998, 30), Iorga’s project actually outlined an especially Romanian history of Byzantium after Byzantium.

A complex and controversial figure, Nicolae Iorga was a politician who served in the Parliament of Romania, and was briefly prime minister. He was also an anti-Semitic nationalist. Sympathetic to Mussolini and supportive of some Romanian fascist leaders, Iorga was assassinated in 1940 by members of the radically fascist Iron Guard (Ioanid 1992, 467–68). Iorga was also a prolific historian with a nationalist’s interest in Romanian

art and architecture. His ideology pervaded his writing on Romanian history and art, and his books are steeped in the politics of the decades in which he wrote them. Perhaps somewhat misunderstood now, the idea of Byzantium after Byzantium continues to resonate with historians and art historians. Iorga defined *Byzantium after Byzantium* as “a complex of institutions, a political system, a religious formation, a type of civilization, comprising the Hellenic intellectual legacy, Roman law, the Orthodox religion, and everything it created and preserved in terms of art” (Iorga 2000, 25). Thus, Iorga’s phrase “Byzance après Byzance” referred specifically to “a complex of institutions” that outlived the Byzantine Empire until Byzantinism was displaced by a philhellenism focused on Classical Antiquity (Iorga 2000, 233–34). From the sixteenth century, there was a sense that Byzantium could be restored. Romanian princes, in particular, saw themselves as successors to “imperial” Byzantium. “Around these princes,” wrote Iorga, “a whole new aristocracy of Greeks, arrived from all the provinces there, far from the dangers of Constantinople, and thus recreating Byzantium on the banks of the Danube” (Iorga 2000, 143). As a historical period, then, Iorga’s Byzance après Byzance corresponds closely to what historians now usually mean by the term *post-Byzantine*, but the cultural phenomena he described were often specific to Romania.

Byzance après Byzance reflected its author’s nationalism. Although Iorga regarded Byzantium as “an abstract conception which can be transferred by circumstance to other countries, to serve other races” (Iorga 1932, 131), it is important to understand Iorga’s view of history in the context of his pro-monarchist and anti-Semitic views and his support for the reunification of Bucovina, Bessarabia, and Transylvania with Romania (Ioanid 1992, 469–71). Rather than reducing Iorga’s work to a mere curiosity for historiographers, however, his nationalism is perhaps all the more reason to take careful note of Iorga’s ideas about the significance of the Byzantine Empire to nations in the post-Byzantine sphere, so that we can critique the project of post-Byzantine studies, and continue to pursue it with our eyes open. The nationalist impulses driving the origin of the field at least partly account for the continuing focus on geographical spheres of influence. Once we step back to take in a broader view of Orthodox Christian art, we can observe certain tendencies slipping across borders.

Foremost among the traditional assumptions behind the study of post-Byzantine art has been the idea that we can define “Byzantine art,” that a Byzantine tradition survived the end of the empire, and that we can differentiate between art made before May 29, 1453, and art made after that fateful day. Naturally, then, much of the scholarship dealing with post-Byzantine art has either assumed or attempted to prove that, despite characteristics that distinguish the art of one place from the art of another, innovations and deviations did not completely disrupt an identifiable cultural continuity with the former empire. Such continuity is clearly on display in the apse of the *katholikon* of the Kaisariani monastery near Athens (Figure 17.1). Here we find the Divine Liturgy painted in the eighteenth century by George Markou or his students (Chatzidakis 1980, 16–17; Gouma-Peterson 1994, 344). The handling of color and the modeling of the faces associate this cycle stylistically with Venetian Crete, although the figures wear Turkish fabrics (Chatzidakis 1980, 16). The iconography, however, was a Late Byzantine



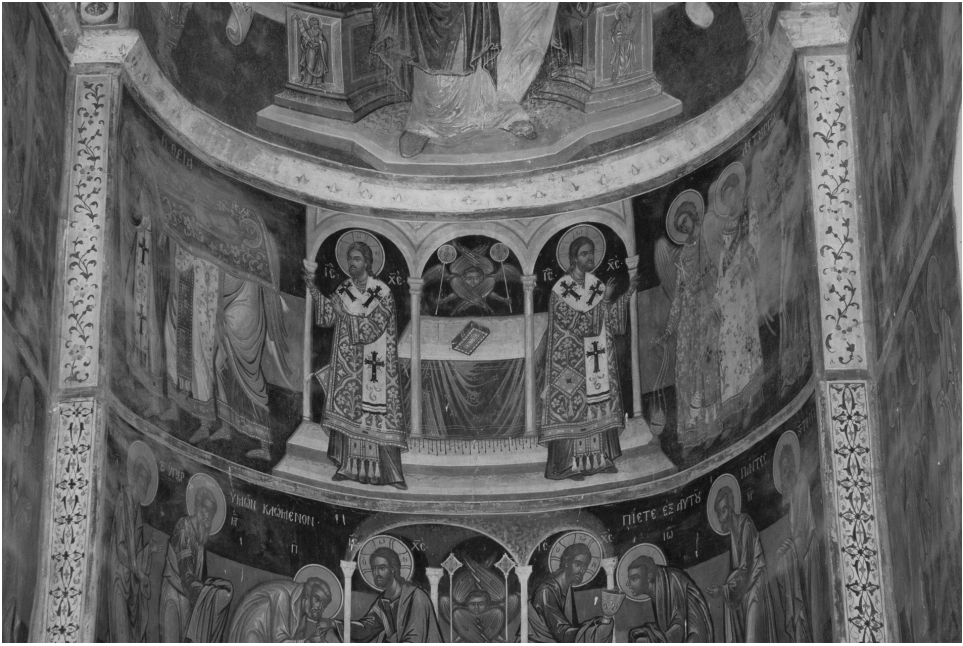


FIGURE 17.1. Fresco of the Divine Liturgy in the apse of the katholikon of the Kaisariani Monastery: Greece, early eighteenth century. Photo: Henry D. Schilb.

development associated with Mt. Athos. The wall painting shows angels carrying a large *aër*, the liturgical veil associated with the Great Entrance, which is the specific part of the Divine Liturgy presented as standing for the Divine Liturgy as a whole. The *aër* is carried above the heads of the angels so that this image repeats a detail of the Divine Liturgy iconography that was almost certainly no longer part of actual liturgical practice by the time this painting was made.

We can observe the survival of recognizably Byzantine features in architecture, but post-Byzantine church buildings also exhibit the effects of Western style, Turkish rule, or both. In Venetian-held territory, Renaissance and Baroque features are readily apparent in Cretan churches such as the katholikon of the Arkadi Monastery (1587) (Bouras 1991, 260). Among the effects of Ottoman rule were the modest scale of churches and the suppression of belfries (Ćurčić 1988, 68–72). While longitudinal plans were widely adopted, monasteries in the Balkans also preserved the domed central plan (Triantaphyllopoulos 2002, 6–7). In Romania, we discover a unique adaptation of the Athonite triconch plan, which migrated to Moldavia by way of Serbia and Wallachia (Mango 1985, 194). The katholikon at Voroneț, begun in the late fifteenth century, exhibits the long, rectangular narthex typical of Moldavian churches (Figure 17.2/Color Plate 9A). The addition of an exonarthex in the sixteenth century augmented the length of the Voroneț katholikon. Over the nave is a high dome resting upon a drum supported by alternating



FIGURE 17.2 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 9A). Katholikon of the Voroneț Monastery, east exterior. Romania, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries. By Dstefanescu via Wikimedia Commons.

pendentives and arches. Peculiar to Moldavia, this odd support system for the central dome elaborates a feature inherited from Byzantine churches.

The extensive wall paintings on the church exterior at Voroneț emphasize the expanded architectural forms. Among the most famous examples of the sixteenth-century paintings on Moldavian church exteriors is the striking Last Judgment painted at Voroneț about 1550 (Figure 17.3/Color Plate 9B) (Văetiși 2008, 76–78; Himka 2009, 77).

The widening of this iconography in post-Byzantine painting is a complicated matter, with regional developments in, for example, Rus’ and Carpathian art (Himka 2009). There are also treatments of the subject by Cretan painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Georgios Klontzas and Leos Moschos (Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, M. 2008, 69). The Last Judgment is a feature of several painted programs at Moldavian churches associated with the *voivode* Petru Rareș (ca. 1487–1546) (Artimon 2017, 198–99). Filling the entire western wall on the exterior of the added exonarthex, the subject is rendered at Voroneț on a monumental scale. Conspicuous among the damned are several groups of figures identified by inscriptions—including Jews, Turks, Tatars, and Armenians—with individual figures wearing turbans or hats specific to each group. Some scholars have regarded the individuation of the figures among the Turks in this image as so emphatic that they read the image at Voroneț as a display of anti-Ottoman sentiment specific to sixteenth-century Moldavia (Artimon 2017, 200–2).

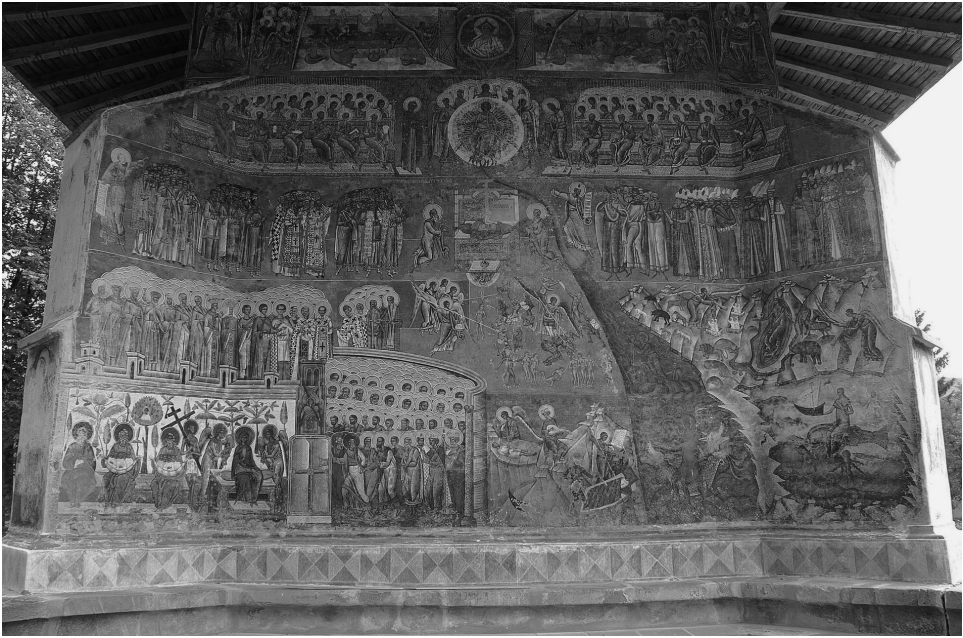


FIGURE 17.3 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 9B). Last Judgment, katholikon of the Voroneț Monastery, west exterior. Romania, ca. 1550. Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

At the east end of the church (Figure 17.2/Color Plate 9A), the program of exterior paintings is what we expect to see inside the apse of a Byzantine church. The *Pantokratōr* appears at the very top, with the Virgin Mary enthroned above the *melismos* in the arch around the window flanked by concelebrating figures. Thus, at Voroneț and other Moldavian churches, a Byzantine architectural form has been stretched and elaborated, and its interior decoration has spilled outside.

A different issue of extended development can be seen in a representative Cretan icon, which will illustrate this effect seen in post-Byzantine painted panels. Demonstrating the “incorporation of western religious art into Byzantine expression” (Cormack 1997, 206), a seventeenth-century icon of the *Noli me Tangere* at the British Museum blends western and Byzantine iconographic elements and figural styles (Figure 17.4) (Cormack 2007, 91; Lymberopoulou, Harrison, and Ambers 2011; British Museum 2017).

This icon combines several related scenes into one composition, and it is probably a copy of a larger icon signed by Michael Damaskinos (ca. 1530–1593) in the Museum of St. Catherine in Heraklion (Drandaki 2009, 100; Lymberopoulou, Harrison, and Ambers 2011, 185). In both icons, there is a pervasive tension resulting from the contrast between the Renaissance naturalism of the figures and the Byzantinizing abstraction of the gold background and the rocky parts of the landscape. Crete’s centrality to post-Byzantine studies is due in part to the relatively abundant documentation of Cretan art (Cormack 1997, 176) and in part to the appeal of studying icons either signed by artists or attributable to named artists and their followers. These factors have certainly affected

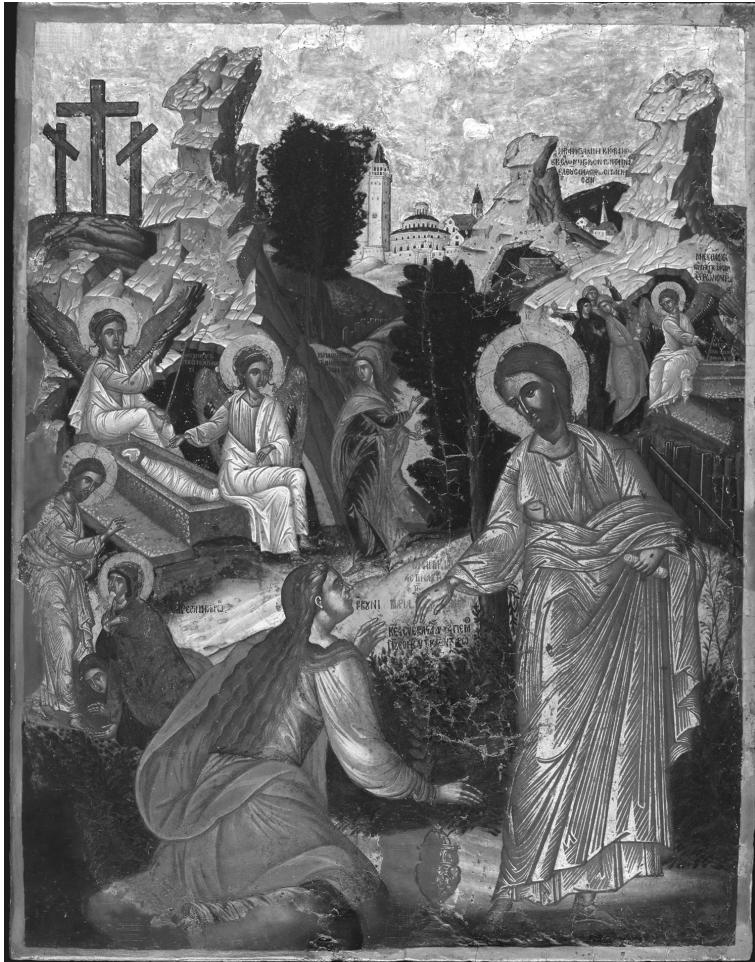


FIGURE 17.4. Icon of the *Noli me Tangere*. Crete, seventeenth century, 63 × 47 cm. British Museum 1994,0501.3. © Trustees of the British Museum.

how art historians who place Crete at the center of the post-Byzantine world think and write about post-Byzantine art. The differentiation of professional artists in Venetian-controlled territory from workshops in Ottoman-held lands (Triantaphyllopoulos 2002, 5; Spratt 2012, 16) possibly also contributes to the treatment of Cretan art as a special (Western) kind of post-Byzantine art. The narrow focus on Crete finds parallels in the historiography of post-Byzantine Romania and Serbia. What sometimes gets lost in the parochial approach to art history are instances of post-Byzantine art crossing borders, such as the reception of post-Byzantine art in Ethiopia (Cormack 1997, 211–13; Heldman 2005).

Because the Orthodox Christian art of Russian lands ought to be taken into account, as should Romanian art, any definition of post-Byzantine that excludes territory that

was never part of the empire is flawed. For the post-Byzantine period, the lasting influence of the Byzantine painter Theophanes the Greek (ca. 1340–ca. 1410) and his follower Andrei Rublev (ca. 1360–1430) is evident in Russian religious art. Art historians have typically treated Russian art of the post-Byzantine period as the work of followers of artists like Rublev or as regional schools centered especially on Moscow and Novgorod (Stuart 1975; Cormack 2007, 94–97). The art of Novgorod, for example, may be broadly characterized as exhibiting an attenuated figural style (associated with Rublev) and a geometric treatment of landscape. While Cretan painters of the eighteenth century may have had manuals to follow, like the *Hermeneia* of Dionysius of Fournà (Hetherington 1974), Muscovite painters of the sixteenth century worked under an explicit prohibition against innovation imposed after the Council of the Hundred Chapters (*Stoglav*) of 1551 (*Le Stoglav* 1920). The effects of this prohibition began to decline by the seventeenth century with the introduction of greater naturalism into painting (Murphy 1988, 150–51), but the insistence in Muscovite image theory that painters imitate old prototypes actually deviated from Byzantine practice, in which the adherence to iconographic conventions was never so explicitly strict.

When we bring other types of objects into the field of study, we find that many of the tendencies observed in the production of icons still apply. As had been the case in Late Byzantine art, iconographic innovation in painting found a mirror in embroidery (Kakavas 2002, 184–86), and an eighteenth-century *epitaphios* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (V&A 2017; Johnstone 1967, 61, 126) exhibits a figural style comparable to the naturalism found in Cretan icons of the period (Figure 17.5). (Compare the fourteenth-century *epitaphios* in Woodfin chapter, this volume, Figure 38.4.) The *epitaphios* is a large liturgical veil used on Good Friday, and the Victoria and Albert *epitaphios* features a version of the *Epitaphios Threnos* (Lamentation) iconography typical of the period. In the figural style, however, and in the rendering of faces in particular, this embroidery demonstrates the effect of Cretan painting. Evidence of Western influence in post-Byzantine embroidery is not limited to the treatment of figures, however. The eighteenth-century Serbian embroiderer Christopher Žefarović also had a “feeling for the baroque” (Johnstone 1967, 127), which is most evident in his handling of ornament.

As with Cretan icons, we have the names of more artists than we do for examples predating 1453. Embroidered inscriptions on post-Byzantine textiles supply good evidence about artists and donors. Our list of named post-Byzantine embroiderers even includes women, the name Despoineta being the most renowned. Despoineta is associated with several embroidered textiles of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, including a large *epitaphios* in the Benaki Museum dated 1682 (Johnstone 1967, 125–26). So prominent a part of the collection of the Benaki Museum has this *epitaphios* become that it has been reproduced on posters and postcards, with one element of the iconography even appearing on embroidered sachets of potpourri sold in the museum’s gift shop.

Among the most characteristic features of Despoineta’s work is a proliferation of iconographic elements as well as a more naturalistic treatment of the figures, following



FIGURE 17.5. Epitaphios. Greece, 1712. Victoria and Albert Museum T.48-1932. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

developments in Cretan painting. Unusual in Despoineta’s version of the Epitaphios Threnos iconography is the introduction of a large ciborium over the figure of Christ. The ciborium appeared on epitaphioi much earlier than the beginning of the seventeenth century, the period Pauline Johnstone cited for its first appearance (Johnstone 1967, 126), as early as the fifteenth century, or even the late fourteenth century, in the regions of Moscow and Novgorod. To iconography originating in Greek-speaking territory, Russian embroiderers added the ciborium. In her workshop possibly located in Constantinople, Despoineta seems to have introduced the ciborium from the Russian tradition into Greek-speaking territory. The inscription on the Victoria and Albert epitaphios provides the names Despoineta and Alexandra. Presumably, Alexandra was a follower of the same Despoineta who embroidered the Benaki epitaphios. Although a general tendency toward greater complexity can be observed in the decoration of post-Byzantine epitaphioi—in which the space of the composition is crowded with figures, landscape, and decorative motifs—the Victoria and Albert epitaphios includes elements of figural style and iconography from Despoineta’s epitaphios but not the proliferation of details or the crowding of the composition. Can we attribute the relative simplicity of the iconography on some embroidered textiles to frugality or haste? Questions like this are notoriously difficult or even impossible to answer. Unfortunately, then, a very human

part of the story of post-Byzantine art may be permanently inaccessible. Nevertheless, from a workshop attributed to Constantinople, Despoineta and Alexandra's epitaphios reveals that embroiderers were engaged in a conversation with Russian and Cretan artists.

That elements of iconography were borrowed for one medium from another was always a feature of Byzantine art. It continued in post-Byzantine art, and the migration of these features carried across political and geographic boundaries as well. Originating in Byzantine wall paintings, the iconography of the Epitaphios Threnos migrated to textiles and then to painted panel icons. Printed versions of the Epitaphios Threnos iconography also began to appear on post-Byzantine cloth *antimensia* (see, for example, *Treasures of Mount Athos* 496–501). The antimensia is the consecrated cloth altar spread on the altar table. Printing had been used since the seventeenth century for paper icons, which proliferated especially in the nineteenth century (Papastratos 1990, 17). The use of printing for paper icons allowed for mass production of items either distributed as souvenirs to visitors or meant to entice potential pilgrims. The iconography thus often features a representation of a monastery (Papastratos 1990, 18). That they allowed for the duplication of detailed versions of the Epitaphios Threnos iconography is almost certainly one of the reasons printing techniques came to adorn antimensia as well.

Like the Epitaphios Threnos, the iconography of the Divine Liturgy also originated in Byzantine wall paintings, especially at Mt. Athos, and we find it transcribed into portable icons in the sixteenth century. An icon signed by Michael Damaskinos combines the iconography of Divine Liturgy with the iconography of the Trinity (Drandaki 2009, 102) in a single, crowded composition that threatens to spread over the frame (Figure 17.6).

The combining of more than one iconographic unit into a single composition and the crowding of the compositional space were not unique to Cretan painting. We can locate this phenomenon in other regions, including Russia. A seventeenth-century Russian icon of the Anastasis from the Menil Collection (Carr 2011, 160–63) illustrates both tendencies. The icon includes additional scenes, and the artist has augmented the Anastasis itself with vast crowds of figures and an extended view of Hell that may remind the viewer of Last Judgment iconography of the type seen at the katholikon of Voronež. Other painters repeated the Divine Liturgy as a subject for portable icons. Extant examples include one at the Greek Institute in Venice, signed by John Moskos, and an unsigned icon at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Cselenyi and Moran 1983). Like the *Noli me Tangere* icons by Michael Damaskinos (Drandaki 2009, 100) and in the British Museum (Figure 17.4), the icon of the Divine Liturgy models the faces of figures with a high contrast between light and shadow. Unlike the *Noli me Tangere* icons, the space surrounding the figures in the Divine Liturgy icons is entirely abstract. On the *Noli me Tangere* icons, the figure of Mary Magdalen in the foreground draws us into the receding landscape. The very different treatment of space on icons of the Divine Liturgy reveals the origin of the iconography in another medium. We read the Great Entrance procession circumambulating the Trinity as though the whole procession is seen from above and from the side simultaneously. Perhaps the treatment of



FIGURE 17.6. Michael Damaskinos, icon of the Divine Liturgy. Crete, late sixteenth century, 109 × 87 cm. Museum of St. Catherine, Heraklion. By Cmessier via Wikimedia Commons.

the procession on these icons was meant to suggest the curved space inside an apse, where paintings of the Divine Liturgy were typically located. The strange representation of the space is a simple solution to the problem of transcribing a complicated iconography from wall paintings to a two-dimensional surface.

The apparent oddness of the icon of the Divine Liturgy may have more to do with how we have conceptualized Cretan art as Orthodox iconography presented in a Renaissance mode. However, what this image demonstrates is that Orthodox



iconography could be reconfigured for another medium, a phenomenon that was typical of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art. Although the combination of the Divine Liturgy and the Trinity may have been a novel presentation of doctrinal themes (Constantoudaki-Kitromilides 2008, 66), the composition of the Divine Liturgy icon is not actually so very strange. With the most important figures near the center of the image and surrounded by a swirl of figures or landscape, the composition of the Divine Liturgy icon is similar to other icons attributed to Michael Damaskinos, such as the Virgin of the Burning Bush at the Museum of St. Catherine in Heraklion (Drandaki 2009, 94). What makes the composition of the Divine Liturgy icon seem odd, then, is simply that it compresses a composition usually deployed in three dimensions onto a two-dimensional panel, and that it combines the Divine Liturgy with the Trinity. The iconography of the Divine Liturgy is essentially an illustration of the Cherubic Hymn sung during the Great Entrance, and Michael Damaskinos continues to treat the visual representation of the Great Entrance hymn as standing for the Divine Liturgy as a whole. However, a different hymn is written within this icon. An angel at the left side of the composition holds a scroll inscribed with the hymn “Let all mortal flesh be silent,” which replaces the usual Cherubic Hymn for the Great Entrance on Holy Saturday. This might suggest that the painter misunderstood the meaning of the iconography of the wall paintings. While reinterpreting the image for a painted panel, the artist seems to have misinterpreted the veil carried by the angels near the top, mistaking the aër for an epitaphios—thus also mistaking the Great Entrance for the Holy Saturday procession—or perhaps simply conflating the two. Regardless of how we answer the question of why the artist used that particular hymn on this icon, the iconography has been transformed by its transcription from wall paintings to a painted panel. Transferring iconography from one kind of surface to another was always a feature of Byzantine art. Thus, when we identify this phenomenon in icons from Venetian Crete, what we recognize is one of the Byzantinizing features of post-Byzantine art.

The history of post-Byzantine art is too messy to describe tidily with a single definition of the term *post-Byzantine*. It was an evolving tradition across parts of the world that extended beyond former Byzantine territory. Boundaries were porous, countries not self-contained (Cormack 1997, 172), and the great amount of material that must be considered practically forces a scholar to focus too narrowly, to see only trees where the forest is too vast and dense. An important flaw in the story that we read about post-Byzantine art is the narrow focus on one type of object. Even though liturgical implements or ecclesiastical objects often outnumber painted panel icons in exhibitions (see, for example, Kakavas 2002), art historians persist in favoring icons, the Byzantine and post-Byzantine object that most resembles art history’s favorite Western art. If post-Byzantine studies can be regarded as a field in its own right, its geographic and cultural scope must continue to widen, and some basic questions must be addressed. What role does post-Byzantine art play in the story that we tell about art in the world? Should we think of the post-Byzantine world as having more than one center, or was the post-Byzantine world all periphery around an absent center? The continued utility of

the term *post-Byzantine* when identifying art of certain times and places depends upon what historians of post-Byzantine art mean when they use it. As they continue to redefine what they mean by *post-Byzantine*, art historians ought to embrace the opportunity to ask new questions and to reshape the field of study.

## REFERENCES

- Artimon, T. 2017. “All Moldavian Eyes on Ottomans: Perceptions and Representations at the End of the Fifteenth Century and the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century.” In *Practices of Coexistence: Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perceptions*, edited by M. Birnbaum and M. Sebök, 177–217 (Budapest).
- Bouras, C. 1991. *Byzantine & Post-Byzantine Architecture in Greece* (Athens).
- British Museum. 2017. “Collection Online: Icon with the Noli me tangere.” [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=58754&partId=1&searchText=Icon+with+the+Noli+me+tangere&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=58754&partId=1&searchText=Icon+with+the+Noli+me+tangere&page=1).
- Cameron, A. 2014. *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton).
- Carr, A. W., ed. 2011. *Imprinting the Divine: Byzantine and Russian Icons from the Menil Collection* (Houston).
- Chatzidakis, M. 1976. *Etudes sur la peinture postbyzantine* (London).
- Chatzidakis, N., ed. 1993. *Apo ton Chandaka ste Venetia: Hellenikes eikones sten Italia 150s–160s aionas* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Chatzidakis, T. 1980. *The Monastery of Kaisariani* (Athens).
- Clark, W. 1858. *Peloponnesus* (London).
- Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, M. 2008. “Tradition and Diversity: Icon Painting in Crete, Venice, and the Ionian Islands and El Greco’s Early Career.” In *The Greek World under Ottoman and Western Domination: 15th–19th Centuries*, edited by P. Kitromilides and D. Arvanitakes, 55–79 (New York).
- Cormack, R. 1997. *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds* (London).
- Cormack, R. 2007. *Icons* (Cambridge, MA).
- Cselenyi, L., and N. Moran. 1983. “An Icon of the Divine Liturgy: Late Byzantine Painting in the ROM.” *Rotunda: The Magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum* 16, 3: 28–33.
- Ćurčić, S. 1988. “Byzantine Legacy in Ecclesiastical Architecture of the Balkans after 1453.” In *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe*, edited by L. Clucas, 59–81 (New York).
- Ćurčić, S. 2008. “The ‘Absence of Byzantium’: The Role of a Name.” *Nea Estia* 82: 492–99.
- Ćurčić, S. 2013. “‘Post-Byzantine’ Art: What Is It? Whose Is It?” Paper presented at “Post-Byzantine” Art: Orthodox Christian Art in a “Non-Byzantine” World? Academic conference, May 15–16, 2013, Central European University in Budapest. <https://cems.ceu.edu/participants-abstracts-1>.
- Drandaki, A., ed. 2009. *Origins of El Greco: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
- Getty Research Institute. 2017. “Art & Architecture Thesaurus Online: Post-Byzantine (Byzantine (culture and style).” [http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=post-byzantine&logic=AND&note=&english=N&prev\\_page=1&subjectid=300379797](http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=post-byzantine&logic=AND&note=&english=N&prev_page=1&subjectid=300379797).
- Gouma-Peterson, T. 1994. “An 18th Century Deesis Icon and Its Cultural Context,” *DChAE* 17: 331–46.

- Gratziou, O. 2005. "Metabyzantinē technē: chronologikos prosdiorismos hē ennoiologikē katēgoria." In *1453: Hē halōsē tēs Kōnstantinoupolēs kai hē metavasē apo tous mesaiōnikous stous neōterous chronous*, edited by T. Kiousopoulou, 183–96 (Heraklion).
- Gratziou, O. 2013. "Beyond the Borders of an Awkward Definition." Paper presented at "Post-Byzantine" Art: Orthodox Christian Art in a "Non-Byzantine" World? Academic conference, May 15–16, 2013, Central European University in Budapest. <https://cems.ceu.edu/participants-abstracts-1>.
- Heldman, M. 2005. "St. Luke as Painter: Post-Byzantine Icons in Early-Sixteenth-Century Ethiopia." *Gesta* 44, 2: 125–48.
- Hetherington, P. 1974. *The "Painter's Manual" of Dionysius of Fournas: An English Translation [from the Greek] with Commentary of cod. gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad* (London).
- Himka, J.-P. 2009. *Last Judgment Iconography in the Carpathians* (Toronto).
- Ioanid, R. 1992. "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism." *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, 3: 467–92.
- Iorga, N. 1932. *My American Lectures* (Bucharest).
- Iorga, N. 1935. *Byzance après Byzance* (Bucharest).
- Iorga, N. 2000. *Byzantium after Byzantium*, translated by L. Treptow (Iași).
- Johnstone, P. 1967. *The Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery* (Chicago).
- Kakavas, G., ed. 2002. *Post-Byzantium: The Greek Renaissance: 15th–18th Century Treasures from the Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Kitromilides, P. 1995. "Byzance après Byzance Revisited: Changing Perspectives on Europe's Byzantine Heritage." *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikōn Spoudōn* 11: 9–11.
- Kitromilides, P. 1998. "On the Intellectual Content of Greek Nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea." In *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, edited by D. Ricks and P. Magdalino, 25–33 (Aldershot).
- Kitromilides, P., and D. Arvanitakes, eds. 2008. *The Greek World under Ottoman and Western Domination: 15th–19th Centuries* (New York).
- Kondakov, N. P. 1928–1933. *Russkaja ikona* (Prague).
- Lymberopoulou, A., L. Harrison, and J. Ambers. 2011. "The Noli Me Tangere Icon at the British Museum: Vision, Message and Reality." In *Images of the Byzantine World*, edited by A. Lymberopoulou, 185–214. (Burlington).
- Mango, C. 1985. *Byzantine Architecture* (Milan).
- Murphy, D. 1988. "Cicero and the Icon Painters: The Transformation of Byzantine Image Theory in Medieval Muscovy." In *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe*, edited by L. Clucas, 149–64. (New York).
- Nilsson, I., and P. Stephenson, eds. 2014. *Wanted, Byzantium: The Desire for a Lost Empire* (Uppsala).
- Papastratos, D. 1990. *Paper Icons: Greek Orthodox Religious Engravings, 1665–1899* (Athens).
- La Peinture religieuse grecque post-byzantine et néo-hellénistique*. 1935. (Lyon). Exhibition catalogue.
- Safran, L. 2012. "'Byzantine' Art in Post-Byzantine Italy?" *Common Knowledge* 18, 3: 487–504.
- Spratt, E. 2012. "Toward a Definition of 'Post-Byzantine' Art: The Angleton Collection at the Princeton University Art Museum." *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 71/72: 2–19.
- Le Stoglav, ou les Cent chapitres*. 1920. Translated by E. Duchesne (Paris).
- Stuart, J. 1975. *Ikons* (London).
- Treasures of Mount Athos*.

- Triantaphyllopoulos, D. 2002. “Byzance après Byzance.” In 2002. *Post-Byzantium: The Greek Renaissance: 15th–18th Century Treasures from the Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens*, edited by G. Kakavas, 3–24 (Athens).
- V&A. 2017. “Search the Collections.” <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O121303/epitaphios/>.
- Văetiși, A. 2008. *Arta de tradiție bizantină în România* (Bucharest).

---

## FURTHER READING

---

Of the works cited, Triantaphyllopoulos 2002, Gratziou 2005, Safran 2012, and Spratt 2012 offer concise introductions to some of the assumptions, conventions, and questions attached to “post-Byzantine” studies. More than any other scholar, Manolis Chatzidakis established post-Byzantine Crete as a specialty within art history (see especially Chatzidakis 1976). Scholarship focused on the art (especially icons) of certain regions or countries (especially Crete, Serbia, Romania, and Russia) is too abundant to offer a truly representative list here. The reader may wish to consult some of the many exhibition catalogues of the last two or three decades. Of the numerous online museum catalogues and other databases, The Icons of Sinai is especially worth mentioning. This resource presents all the icons in the collection of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai, including numerous post-Byzantine icons, as documented in color photographs taken from 1958 to 1965 during the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions under the direction of George Forsyth and Kurt Weitzmann (The Icons of Sinai. 2017. Visual Resources, Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University. <http://vrc.princeton.edu/sinai/>).



## CHAPTER 18

---

# THE BYZANTINE REVIVAL IN EUROPE

---

J. B. BULLEN

BYZANTINE art, architecture, religion, and culture were rejected by post Enlightenment thinkers as “a disgrace to the human mind” (Voltaire), but rediscovered by Romanticism. Yeats’s famous poem “Sailing to Byzantium” (1928) was a late expression of that Romantic impulse in which Yeats represents the empire and its culture in aesthetic terms and as a foil to the political upheaval of contemporary Ireland (Bullen 2007, 17–49).

Yeats’s utopian view of Byzantium had its roots in William Morris’s political idealism and in the concordance among the arts developed by some of his most prominent followers. Delighted by what he saw of Hagia Sophia, Morris spoke eloquently about Byzantine culture. “Nothing,” he said in 1899, “more beautiful than its best works has ever been produced by man” (Morris 1936, 274), and the force of his argument inspired a generation of art-and-crafts architects, including Sidney Barnsley, Edward Lethaby, and the architect of Westminster Cathedral, J. F. Bentley.

Morris’s sense of the intimate connection between cultural achievement and architectural form had come essentially from John Ruskin, and Ruskin was one of the earliest and most articulate enthusiasts for Byzantium in English. Surprisingly, Morris did not warm to San Marco, but Ruskin was overwhelmed by it and wrote some of his most highly charged prose about its role as the principal representative of Byzantine culture in the West.

But it was in Germany in the 1820s that the first Romantic turn to Byzantium seems to have taken place. In a world dominated by the strict rules of Neo-Classicism, the unusual forms of the Byzantine style attracted a number of rich and colorful figures in Bavaria and Prussia, characters who found in Byzantium modes of expression for religious, aesthetic, and political ideas that stood outside the prevailing stylistic orthodoxies.

## GOETHE AND THE BOISSERÉE BROTHERS

With pardonable exaggeration we might date the revival of widespread European interest in Byzantine culture to the year 1823. On the night of July 15 that year, the Roman basilican church of San Paolo fuori le Mura caught fire and was almost completely destroyed. A church had stood here since the fourth century CE, facing first neglect then the critical attacks on Byzantine culture from the Enlightenment *philosophes*. Now it was gone and Europe slowly woke to the fact that something had been irretrievably lost. Its rebuilding was instigated by the recently elected Leo XII, and like the culture it represented, it rose like a phoenix from the flames. There had, however, been signs of curiosity about Byzantine work before this event. In 1814, the interest of the unlikely figure of Goethe had been stimulated by the brothers Sulpiz and Melchior Boisserée. Born in Cologne in the early 1780s, they were the sons of a wealthy merchant. As young men they developed a passion for medieval art. Under the tutelage of Friedrich von Schlegel, Melchior began to make an unprecedented collection of early German paintings, while at the same time Sulpiz began to measure and draw medieval German buildings. The brothers firmly believed that medieval German work had its origins in Byzantium.

In 1810, Sulpiz was introduced to Goethe, who was then arch-dictator of German taste. He was a sixty-year-old celebrity and well-known classicist, but they managed to rouse his interest in their picture collection, and in 1816, he wrote an article entitled "Heidelberg" for the journal *Kunst und Altertum* in which he expressed a fascinating ambivalence toward Byzantine art. For Goethe, Byzantium is made acceptable, or perhaps is tempered, by being Greek in its early phases and German in its later ones. "The Byzantine school of which we have been able to say very little good," he wrote, "still bore within it, merits of its Greek and Roman forefathers" (Goethe 1980, 133). But one comes away from Goethe's essay with the sense that even for him there was a real power, energy, and a strange attraction latent within Byzantine art.

The pattern of Byzantine influence that the Boisserée brothers thought they detected in German painting they transferred to the history of German architecture. Together with Schlegel they developed the idea that early Rhenish churches were characterized by traces of Hellenism that came to them through Byzantium. Sulpiz Boisserée in 1810 identified the Romanesque architecture of the Rhine as *neugriechisch* or *néo-Grec*, which became for him synonymous with "Byzantine" (see Brownlee 1991, 18), and it was from these seeds of interest that early Romantic interest in Byzantium began. It was stimulated and consolidated, however, by royal patronage and particularly by the important figure of Ludwig I of Bavaria.

Ludwig I came to the throne in 1825 at the age of thirty-eight, and his little neo-Byzantine Allerheiligen-Hofkirche, or Court Church of All Saints (1827–1837), had an influence and created an interest among European builders out of all proportion to its size or its place in Ludwig's ambitious and eclectic architectural program (Figure 18.1/Color Plate 10).

Ludwig's first encounter with Byzantine architecture took place in Sicily in 1817. On Christmas Eve he attended mass in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. The light of the



FIGURE 18.1 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 10). Leo von Klenze. Allerheiligen-Hofkirche, Munich, 1826–1837 (destroyed 1942). Watercolor by Franz Xaver Nachtmann, 1848. 41.6 × 31.1. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Sammlung Graphik/Gemälde, used by permission.

candles reflecting from the richly encrusted mosaics captured his imagination, and he told one of his companions, the doctor Emile Ringseis, “I will build myself a private chapel like it” (Corti 1938, 156).

Ludwig was determined upon a Byzantine style for his own court chapel. His principal architect, the classicist Leo von Klenze, hated the idea but was forced to give in



to his master. On the outside, the chapel was German Romanesque; inside it was pure Byzantine. Ludwig wanted mosaics, but the art of manufacturing tesserae had died out, so instead the Nazarene painter Heinrich Hess decorated the interior with hieratic murals. The building was an international success. Anna Mary Howitt, a friend of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was an art student in Munich in 1850 and was amazed by the Hofkirche. "I had no conception how sublimely beautiful is this chapel," she wrote soon after her arrival (Howitt 1853, i, 6). It is built, she said, "in the Byzantine style . . . all one glow of gold, of rich draperies, of angelic forms and faces, of rainbow-tinted wings, of mystical flowers and symbols" (Howitt, 1853, 1: 6–7).

Ludwig's brother-in-law Friedrich Wilhelm IV also had a strong personal and nationalistic interests in Byzantine work. He came to the Prussian throne in 1840, and though he shared a number of Ludwig's passions including a love of Italy and distaste for Napoleonic France, he was very different from his brother-in-law in temperament. Where Ludwig was an aesthetic Catholic, Friedrich was a committed Protestant; where Ludwig was something of a libertine, Friedrich was a Puritan; and where Ludwig wished to establish Munich as an eclectic art capital of Europe, Friedrich was committed to establishing a state modeled on the values of primitive Christianity.

Like the Roman emperor Constantine, who, for Friedrich, was something of a role model, the Prussian monarch was attempting to rebuild an empire ruined by invaders (the French in Friedrich's case). Also like Constantine, he was attempting to build a new monarchical state out of a fervent belief in the political efficacy of Christianity.

Returning from Rome in 1828 via Ravenna and Venice, Friedrich Wilhelm was determined to bring Byzantium to Prussia, but it was not until he came to the throne in 1840 that he was able to put his ambitions fully into operation. Above all, he wanted to revitalize the Protestant Prussian Church, and he decided that architecture would become a prominent symbol of his political and social goals. He found a sympathetic interpreter in Friedrich Schinkel, his principal architect, but only one year after the accession Schinkel died. Ludwig Persius succeeded him and it was under his direction that neo-Byzantine work in northern Germany came to its full flowering. In 1841, he began his Heilandskirch at Sacrow, now Potsdam. This tall, simple Roman basilica with an externally arcaded apse and a free-standing campanile derived from Sta. Maria in Cosmedin in Rome and was soon to be followed by the Friedenskirche (1843), modeled on the basilica of San Clemente.

Though Friedrich's interests tended to Romanesque and basilican rather than Byzantine, he made one extremely significant contribution to the Byzantine Revival in Europe. It took the form of the support of a publication illustrating the greatest Byzantine church in the world, Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Friedrich Wilhelm commissioned the architect Wilhelm Salzenberg to go to Constantinople to make a visual record of the church and the result was *Alt-christliche Baudenkmale von Constantinopel vom V. bis XII. Jahrhundert* (*Ancient Christian Architecture in Constantinople*, 1854). This sumptuous collection of detailed drawings of the architecture and mosaics opened people's

eyes to the splendor of Byzantine art in the Eastern Empire, and it remained a standard reference work for the rest of the century.

Salzenberg's work impresses by its sheer scale. The volume is enormous, the architectural drawings gigantic, and the lithographs pulsating with color. The smoothing of the mosaic effect, the realistic representation of the hands, and the soft modeling of the skin are all more suggestive of Nazarene painting than Byzantine mosaic, but to Salzenberg's contemporaries the engravings must have appeared powerful in their primitive magnificence.

## FRANCE

The revival of interest in Byzantium was developed in France in three different ways. The first was the exploration of Byzantine sites in Greece, Turkey, and beyond by French archaeologists and historians. The second was the fashion for Byzantine architecture, which sprang out of the belief that there existed a native tradition of Byzantine work in France, and third was an interest in the decoration of churches in a Byzantine style.

Though Byzantine revival buildings are not widespread in France, two of the most important span the country geographically and span the period of the nineteenth century. The first, the cathedral of Sainte-Marie-Majeure (1852–1893) is situated in Marseille and has its stylistic roots in an early nineteenth-century Romantic architectural tradition. The second, Sacré-Coeur, which towers over Paris on the hill of Montmartre, is the product of an attempted Catholic Revival, and was not finished until well into the twentieth century. Both of these churches were built in troubled times, both of them grew out of the passionate religious convictions of their respective patrons, and both record the turbulent relationship between the French church and state in the nineteenth century.

We have seen how Germany, or rather Bavaria, discovered Byzantium through the particular passions of Ludwig I and the then rather eccentric interests of the Boisserée brothers. The Boisserée brothers also provide a link between France and Germany since Sulpiz Boisserée was a familiar figure in both Munich and Paris. In the mid-1820s, Sulpiz was known in the French capital as a lecturer and writer on art and architecture and was well known, too, for promulgating the idea that medieval Rhenish churches were Byzantine-Roman. But this fascination for the Byzantine origins of northern European architecture was naturalized in France not by Sulpiz Boisserée but by Ludovic Vitet. Vitet was famous as a novelist and as the editor of the widely read liberal journal *Le Globe*. Under the July monarchy his passion for ancient architecture led to his appointment as first Inspecteur Général des Monuments Historiques, and his interest in early medieval work stemmed from a trip that he made in 1829 to the Rhine where he met the Boisserée brothers. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and he effectively brought the "new" German attitudes to the attention of the French. He adopted the Boisserées' passion and their

terminology. Vitet translated their word *neugriechish* (neo-Greek) into the French *néo-grec* or *Byzantin* and wrote about it as a style burgeoning with “youth and life” (Vitet 1830, 155).

The French passion for Byzantium was translated into modern terms by a group of radical architects. In the late 1820s, Henri Labrouste, Félix Duban, Louis Duc, and Léon Vaudoyer were impressed by Saint-Simonian ideas that indirectly opened the way for the rehabilitation of Byzantine art in historical terms. Saint-Simonian theory perceived historical processes in terms of a number of cycles whereby Byzantine architecture was created in a period of transitional instability and close (so the young architects of the 1820s argued) to contemporary life and contemporary culture.

Alexandre Laborde’s influential *Les Monuments de la France* marks the change most clearly that took place in French sensibility about pre-Gothic architecture. The first edition of 1816 had little space for the “degenerate architecture” between the Late Classical and the flowering of Gothic in the twelfth century. The second edition of 1836, however, is quite different and devotes the first section of the book to some thirty-three French “monuments in the Byzantine or Roman style.” It was the “discovery” of St-Front in Périgueux, however, that confirmed the French in their belief about Eastern influence in France. St-Front was an abbey church of 1120–1150 dedicated to the follower of St. Peter and first bishop of Périgueux. After many years of archaeological labor on the church, the historian Félix Verneilh published a study, *L’Architecture byzantine en France*, that appeared in 1851. As its title signifies, its assertions were far-reaching. Verneilh claimed that France had a hidden tradition of Byzantine architecture that could be traced from St-Front to Byzantium. This view was supported by the powerful figure of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, in his influential *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française* (1854–1868).

In the world of nineteenth-century architectural practice it was Léon Vaudoyer who took most passionately to the idea of Byzantine France. For Vaudoyer and the group of young Saint-Simonians around him, Byzantine art was energetic, innovative, and fresh. It was also exotic without being remote from the French tradition, and it fit an interpretation of the relationship between art and society of which they approved. The outcome of their thinking can be seen in Marseille, where the cathedral church of Sainte-Marie-Majeure dominates the city skyline. Few buildings in the nineteenth century were more caught up in contemporary politics and the struggles of the Church. Its origins lie in the Romantic mythology of the Mediterranean and the arrival of Christianity in France, its foundations rest on the relationship between state and the Church, and its superstructure grew out of the aesthetic conceptualism of Vaudoyer. Sainte-Marie-Majeure is a symbol of many things. It represents the material mid-century prosperity of Marseille; it represents the Catholic revival under the Third Republic; it is the architectural realization of the Saint-Simonianism of Fortoul and Vaudoyer; and it symbolizes the triumph of a pan-European aesthetic over the narrower field of Northern European Gothic. It is a proud, striking, and unusual building, and one that asserts itself at the heart of the port life of Marseille.

## BRITAIN

---

In Germany and France, interest in Byzantium centered on Byzantine architecture and emerged out of an earlier interest in the Romanesque. The sequence was similar in Britain, but there it was a slower process. The reason may have been that Byzantium was remoter for the British than for the rest of Europe. It is true that the terms *Norman* and *Romanesque* were used indifferently and the two often identified as “Byzantine,” but the extremely widespread use of the term *Byzantine* to describe any pre-Gothic building was the result of blurring and confusion, rather than of strong historical connections (Bullen 2004, 139–58). Religious issues also played a part. The Gothic Revival in Britain was a doctrinaire affair. Catholics claimed one thing and Anglicans another, but both perceived Gothic as the Christian style par excellence. In terms of this odd way of thinking, Romanesque was seen as “foreign,” and Byzantine even more remote. It was Oriental and alien, and its long-standing associations with Christianity were almost totally ignored.

Architectural historians of the Gothic, however, could hardly overlook its precursors, and in the late 1830s British architectural writers began to take a serious interest in early medieval and basilican styles. Outstanding here was the work of the Master of Trinity College, William Whewell, who in his book *Architectural Notes on German Churches* (1830) and in advance of continental historians laid the cornerstone for a historical and systematic discrimination between Byzantine and Romanesque (see Bullen 2004, 139–58). The clarification was, however, a slow process and toward the end of the 1830s and the beginning of the 1840s the term *Byzantine* was persistently applied to the few round-arched buildings that now appear decidedly neo-Romanesque. A writer in the *Christian Remembrancer* explaining the use of “Byzantine” suggested that it was generic for “pre-Gothic.” “Byzantine,” he said,

might be its most accurate general name; but as in passing into different countries it became more or less modified, so it has in each received a different denomination: in Italy it is called Lombard, in England, Norman; and to the German churches of the same style, Mr Whewell has affixed the term Romanesque. (Anon. 1842, 576)

Three buildings in this period stand out. They were all called “Byzantine” but to our eyes are Romanesque: Sara Losh, St. Mary’s at Wreay, Cumbria (1842) (Figure 18.2); James Wild at Christ Church, Streatham (1845); and Sidney Herbert at St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Wilton (1845). The first (and perhaps the most remarkable) was ignored (See Bullen 2001, 676–84), the other two were much publicized and their use of round-arched forms, large undecorated wall surfaces, and other un-Gothic features set in train a vigorous debate about the place of non-Gothic styles in modern church design.

In this period the British High Church was profoundly intolerant about the use of Romanesque or Byzantine styles in modern architecture. Like Byzantine art, it was

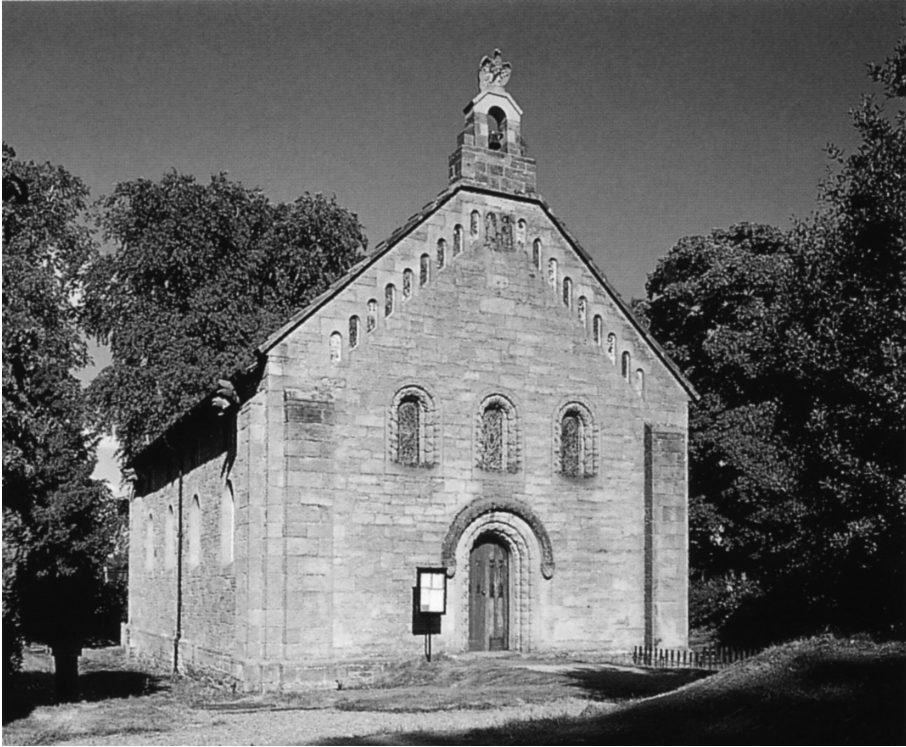


FIGURE 18.2. Sara Losh, St. Mary's at Wreay, Cumbria, 1842. Photo: J. B. Bullen.

un-English and un-Christian. The burgeoning study of the history of architectural style, however, inevitably brought Byzantine work to the attention of British readers. Henry Gally Knight's *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy from the Time of Constantine to the Fifteenth Century* (1842) was a magnificent historical panorama of the history of pre- and early-medieval architecture, with sumptuous drawings of Italian, German, and French buildings by Domenico Quaglio. J. L. Petit's *Remarks on Church Architecture* (1841) was a two-volume anthology of drawings by Petit himself from a Continental trip of 1839, accompanied by his commentary in which he suggested the adoption of a round-arched architecture in Britain. A little later, Edward Freeman published his *History of Architecture* (1849), in which Byzantium took a prominent place in the historical development of world architecture. In spite of its importance, however, in Freeman's eyes it is fundamentally the product of alien culture: "it is not ancient, modern, or mediæval . . . it is Oriental . . . alien in language, government, and general feeling" (Freeman 1849, 164–65).

In all this confusion and condemnation of Byzantine art and architecture in Britain, we usually associate Ruskin with the change of mood, but he was preceded by three lesser-known figures who took up the challenge in favor of Byzantine work. The first was Frances Palgrave, a Jew who converted to Christianity, and who compiled one of the

first guidebooks intended for mass tourism. Ten years before Ruskin, Palgrave as a passionate antiquarian enthused about the Byzantine work in San Marco in his *Handbook for Northern Italy* (1842). “As soon as you cross the threshold” of San Marco, he wrote, “you feel admitted into the Byzantine empire” (Palgrave 1842, 342–43). The second was Lord Lindsay, who, in his remarkable *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847), claimed that “St Mark’s is the glory of Byzantine architecture.” The third is Benjamin Webb, whose intimidatingly dull title, *Sketches of Continental Ecclesiology* (1848), disguises a fascinating guide to the most important European religious centers. For him, San Marco is “unique in the world in almost every point of view,” and he claimed he was mesmerized by the “porphyry, jasper, serpentine and alabaster, verde, and rose antique” and hundreds of other marbles that create “a truly eastern magnificence” (Webb 1848, 268–69).

Ruskin had experienced the fascination of Venice and San Marco long before Webb set foot there. His interest began back in 1835 when, as a boy of sixteen, his parents took him to Italy. His first published views on Byzantine building came in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and by the time that the second volume of *The Stones of Venice* appeared in 1853 there was as yet no real consensus about the status of Byzantium either historically or aesthetically, nor about its place in the history of art and architecture. Ruskin stepped in with a critical discourse that was effusive, tactile, corporeal, even erotic: “Round the walls of the porches,” of San Marco, he writes,

there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, “their bluest veins to kiss,”—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as the receding tide leaves the waved sand. (Ruskin, 1903–1912, 10: 83)

But Ruskin’s is not uncritical romanticism. His account of Venice and San Marco shifts between meticulous observation, moral rhetoric and intense personal responsiveness, and it is embedded in a historical structure, of cultural birth, blossom, and decay. The first readers of *The Stones of Venice* were simultaneously astounded by his language and puzzled by his ideas. Throughout these volumes, Ruskin consciously manipulates his audience; his range of linguistic voices is far greater than that of any contemporary writer and he employs them to entice, to fascinate, and to convert his readers.

So far the British had only read about Byzantium, but in the 1854 Crystal Palace Exhibition in Sydenham, a version of Byzantium came to Britain. A new Byzantine Court was designed for the exhibition by Digby Wyatt and the famous architect Owen Jones, and Jones went on to print three plates to illustrate “Byzantine Ornament” in his hugely innovative book *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856).

One of the effects of Ruskin’s panegyric on San Marco was to increase the public interest in Byzantine design and Byzantine mosaic. A few individuals had been intrigued by mosaic and, as we have seen, in the 1830s Ludwig I had wanted to place mosaic in his

Allerheiligen-Hofkirche, but this was technically impossible because the art of making tesserae had died out. This changed in the 1850s through the inspiration of one man, Antonio Salviati. A native Venetian distressed by the condition of the mosaics in San Marco, Salviati abandoned his job as a lawyer and teamed up with the glass master, Lorenzo Radi, to research the process of tessera manufacture. They succeeded and the firm Salviati's Venetian Enamel-Mosaic Works was a rapid success, beginning to supply the colored glass cubes to potentates throughout Europe. Henry Layard had met Salviati in Venice and facilitated an invitation to decorate the Royal Mausoleum Frogmore (1865) modeled on the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna. By 1868, Salviati realized that Britain would be a useful base for his operations. Since Layard had come to believe that "mosaic is the only external and internal decoration on a great scale which will suit our climate" (Waterfield 1963, 308), the Englishman invested money, and the Venice and Murano Glass Company opened in London.

It is an irony that while the Italian Salviati was working in Britain, the Englishman Edward Burne-Jones was asked to design a mosaic for Rome. The church for which it was destined was G. E. Street's St. Paul's American Church in the via Nazionale. Building began in 1870, and when some ten years later an artist for the mosaics had to be found, Street turned to Burne-Jones. Street had met the painter in the 1860s when he and William Morris were undergraduates at Oxford. He also knew that Burne-Jones had had a long-standing interest in this medium, an interest that went back to his introduction to the art of Venice under the auspices of Ruskin in 1862. After seeing San Marco and Torcello, he wrote to Ruskin saying that his "heart was full of mosaics" (Burne-Jones 1906, ii, 66), and this love of mosaic was strengthened by his visit to the "heavenly churches" of Ravenna in 1873 (Burne-Jones 1906, 2: 37 and 66). Thus in 1881, St. Paul's in Rome offered the long-standing ambition to work in "vast spaces" and to have "big things to do." Burne-Jones saw in mosaic the possibility of creating democratic art on lines suggested by William Morris; he wanted "common people to see them and say and say Oh!—only Oh!" (Burne-Jones 1906, ii, 13).

Burne-Jones co-opted William Morris to help design the mosaics, and the two of them spent many Sunday mornings at Burne-Jones's house, The Grange in London, creating a key system by which the colors on the cartoon could be matched to the colors on the tesserae. During this period, Morris was developing a considerable interest in Byzantine art, an interest that was strengthened by his personal involvement in the craftwork associated with mosaic production. While Burne-Jones was completing the mosaics for Rome, the interest in Byzantium was beginning to inform the burgeoning Arts and Crafts movement, and perhaps the single most important figure behind this late nineteenth-century interest in Byzantium was William Morris himself.

Morris's initial inspiration came from Ruskin, who, in *The Stones of Venice*, attached enormous importance to architectural integrity, honesty, and the autonomy of the craftsman, but Morris intensified the practical and pragmatic aspects of the message, shifting its political implications away from Ruskin's paternalism and toward egalitarian

socialism. And in doing so he placed Byzantine art and architecture on a footing comparable with that of other major historical styles.

For reasons probably connected with his interest in the “Eastern Question” and the threat of a Russo-Turkish war in the mid-1870s, Morris’s interest was drawn to Hagia Sophia. For Morris, Gothic art was the true art of the modern period, and Byzantine art was its earliest manifestation, “new born” out of the decadence of Greece and Rome (Morris 1914, xxii, 185). Morris’s first extended account of Byzantium came in his 1882 lecture, “History of Pattern Designing,” in the period when he was helping Burne-Jones design the mosaics for Rome. But it was in 1889 in a paper entitled “Gothic Architecture” that he described Byzantine “freedom” breaking away from the deadly grip of classicism in his most extended account of Byzantine society and art. “The first expression of this freedom,” he wrote, “is called Byzantine art. The style leaps into completion in this most lovely building” (Morris 1936, 273–74).

For Morris, social unity and equality informed Byzantine culture. Byzantium constituted “a kind of knot to all the many thrums of the first days of modern Europe” (Morris 1914, xxii, 229). It gathered together the arts of India, Mesopotamia, Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, and Egypt, which it “mingled” with the older arts of Greece, and it joined, too, an Eastern love of freedom, mystery, and intricate design with the Western respect for discipline, structure, and fact. “It is the living child and fruitful mother of art, past and future” (Morris 1914, 22: 208).

Morris’s dithyrambic, historically panoramic account of Byzantine architecture, which reaches its peak in *Gothic Architecture*, owes much to Ruskin’s *Nature of Gothic*. But Ruskin’s version of Byzantium began and ended in Venice; Morris took the hint from later archaeological work and gave Byzantine architecture a global significance. “From Italy,” he wrote, “or perhaps even from Byzantium itself, it was carried into Germany and pre-Norman England, touching even Ireland and Scandinavia” (Morris 1936, 274–75).

It is as though Morris has turned all the old attitudes to Byzantium on their heads. Gone is the talk of oppressive tyrants, inflexible religious hierarchies, and cultural stagnation of the Enlightenment *philosophes*, and in its place have appeared ideas about political and personal freedom, life, vitality, and autonomy. Morris mythologized Byzantium in positive economic, political, social, and aesthetic terms. By 1884, Morris’s views were sufficiently widely accepted for five architects from Norman Shaw’s office (led by W. R. Lethaby) to found the Art Workers’ Guild under his auspices. In 1888 its public face, the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, held its first meeting in the New Gallery, and to celebrate its second show in 1889, Morris delivered his passionate account of Byzantium in *Gothic Architecture*. This was the same year, remember, that Lethaby urged Schulz to travel to Greece to study Byzantine architecture. Morris considered this lecture sufficiently important to be delivered to another three London groups and to further groups in Liverpool and Glasgow. Finally, he published it in book form in 1893 and sold it at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of that year.



## REFERENCES

- Anon. 1842. "On the Romanesque Style for Churches in London and Large Towns." *Christian Remembrancer* iii: 567.
- Brownlee, D. B. 1991. "Neugriechisch/Neo-Grec': The German Vocabulary of French Romantic Architecture." *JSAH* 50, 1: 18–21.
- Bullen, J. B. 2001. "Sara Losh: Architect, Romantic, Mythologist." *The Burlington Magazine* 143, 1184: 676–84.
- Bullen, J. B. 2004. "The Romanesque Revival in Britain, 1800–1840: William Gunn, William Whewell, and Edmund Sharpe." *Architectural History* 47: 139–58.
- Bullen, J. B. 2006. "W. B. Yeats, Byzantium and the Mediterranean." In *Anglo-American Modernity and the Mediterranean*, edited by C. Patey, G. Cianci, and F. Cuojati, 17–49 (Milan).
- Burne-Jones, G. 1906. *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. (London).
- Corti, E. C. 1938. *Ludwig I of Bavaria*. (Butterworth, UK).
- Freeman, E. A., J. Masters, and J. Masters. *A History of Architecture* (London).
- Goethe, J. W. von, and J. Gage. 1980. *Goethe on Art* (London).
- Howitt, afterwards Watts, A. M. 1853. *An Art-Student in Munich*. 2 vols. (London).
- Morris, M. 1936. *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* (Oxford).
- Morris, W., and M. Morris. 1914. *The Collected Works of William Morris*. Vol. 22 (London).
- Palgrave, F. 1842. *Hand-book for Travellers in Northern Italy* [by Sir F. Palgrave] (London).
- Ruskin, J., Sir E. T. Cook, and A. D. O. Wedderburn. 1903–1912. *The Works of John Ruskin*. 38 vols. Library edition (London).
- Vitet, L. 1830. "De l'architecture Lombarde." *Revue français* 15: 151–73.
- Waterfield, Gordon. 1863. *Layard of Ninevah* (London).
- Webb, B. 1848. *Sketches of Continental Ecclesiology, or Church Notes in Belgium, Germany, and Italy* (London).

PART THREE

---

THE REALIA OF  
BYZANTINE ART

---



---

# *Archaeology*

---



## CHAPTER 19

---

# ARCHAEOLOGY: SITES AND APPROACHES

---

ERIC A. IVISON

### INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORY AND DEFINITION OF THE FIELD

---

As an academic field, and as a practical discipline, the archaeological study of Byzantium can be defined as a historical archaeology, in that it combines the analysis of data derived from physical remains or material culture with that of written historical sources. The term *Byzantine archaeology* is here used as a broad and convenient label for the archaeological investigation of former lands of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. It is not possible for this essay to cover all lands of the former empire, and so it offers a selective overview of the archaeology of the Byzantine era in the core heartlands of modern Greece and Turkey.

The sixteenth-century French topographer of Constantinople Pierre Gilles (Petrus Gyllius) can be regarded as the progenitor of the field (Ousterhout 2011, 185), but the roots of modern Byzantine archaeology can be traced back to the nineteenth century, within the emergent field of Early Christian archaeology that had formed part of Early Christian studies in Western Europe since the Renaissance (Frend 1996, 11–40). Early Christian archaeology was and is an academic field that focuses on the study of Early Christian communities, religious art and architecture, church history, and theology in the Roman world. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the monuments of the Eastern Empire were rediscovered and incorporated into this Early Christian template, framed *a priori* by monuments in Rome, Italy and western Europe, particularly in Italian- and German-speaking scholarship, where the tradition of studying Byzantium as an extension of Early Christian studies remains strong today. The emergence of specialized disciplines of Byzantine art and architectural history in the late nineteenth century led to the systematic study not only of the monuments of the Late Antique period,

but those of the entire medieval Byzantine era (Wischmeyer 2017; Brandenburg 1992; Frend 1996, 11–179; Pettegrew, Caraher, and Davis 2019, 3–9).

These academic origins meant that archaeological investigations in the nineteenth and for much of the twentieth centuries were overwhelmingly focused on the buildings, art, and material culture of the Byzantine church, and were heavily dependent on texts and art historical approaches (e.g., Winfield 2000; Athanassopoulos 2016). This approach is quite evident from the organization and content of the first English-language handbook of Byzantine archaeology by O. M. Dalton, which ranks the products of the fine arts and iconography over “various” quotidian objects like pottery (Dalton 1911). Of particular importance for the recording of Byzantine architecture was the adoption of the German *Bauforschung* method for the scientific recording of historical buildings, an approach that remains strong today (Neumann 2002). Highly significant studies on the topography, monuments, fortifications, and churches of Constantinople (including Hagia Sophia) appeared before 1914, but the first field surveys and systematic excavations took place during and immediately after World War I (at the Mangana and Hebdomon), and between the 1920s and 1950s at the Hippodrome and the Great Palace (Ousterhout 2011, 186–92, 195–205; Frend 1996, 241–43; Dark and Özgümüş 2013, 1–6). Outside of Istanbul, churches and Christian inscriptions were a major focus of investigations in Asia Minor and Greece at this time (Frend 1996, 91–107, 130–43, 193–96, 243–45; Ousterhout 2011, 192–99, 239–41). The early explorations of Classical city sites in the later nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries also led to the first excavations of Byzantine settlements, notably at ancient Ephesus, Sardis, and Pergamon, and at Corinth, Philippi, and Nea Anchialos-Phthiotic Thebes (Frend 1996, 138–43, 190–93, 205–6, 243–45). In these early days, Byzantine archaeology was viewed through an orientalist and colonial lens, and although churches were objects of interest, Byzantine occupation layers were often regarded with disdain and removed with only summary recording. Proper documentation and publication of Byzantine period excavations only began in the 1930s (Ousterhout 2011, 192–99; Kourelis 2011–2012; Decker 2016, 31–34). Urban excavations increased after the Second World War, when modern development led to highly significant discoveries due to chance finds and survey and rescue excavations in modern cities like Istanbul and Thessaloniki (Dark and Özgümüş 2013, 1–6; Antonaras 2016, 9, and *passim*).

The archaeology of the fourth to seventh centuries continues to be referred to as Early Christian (Pettegrew, Caraher, and Davis), but in recent decades, the non-religious identifiers of Late Roman, Late Antique, and Early Byzantine have become more common (Lavan and Bowden 2003, vii–xvi). The period ca. 600–900 has been referred to as the Byzantine “Dark Ages,” although alternatives such as “transitional” and “(Byzantine) early mediaeval” have also been proposed. The conventional terms Middle Byzantine and Late Byzantine are usually applied to the archaeology of the periods ca. 900–1204 and 1204–1453 respectively (Iverson 2012, 8–9; Decker 2016, 2–3, 37; Ousterhout 2019, 3).

The art historical ancestry of Byzantine archaeology continues to shape its identity and place in the university curriculum and the academy. Scholars who self-identify

as Byzantine archaeologists are found mostly in departments of art history or history rather than archaeology or anthropology. Outside of monographs, archaeological reports, and conference proceedings, their publications tend to appear in art historical, architectural, or historical journals, as there is no dedicated periodical devoted to furthering the cause of Byzantine archaeology as a distinct field.

Byzantine art and architectural history remain core specialized fields that make major contributions, but it is only in recent decades that a new, distinctly archaeological sensibility has emerged, which while not repudiating its art historical core, has vastly expanded its sources, research agenda, and methodologies beyond the interpretation of the architectural and representational legacy of Byzantine civilization. Under the influence of other archaeologies, Byzantine archaeologists have enlarged their source base to include all surviving physical remnants of the Byzantine past, and have expanded their research agendas to embrace questions and methodologies similar to those employed by other archaeologies, albeit adapted to the Byzantine historical context.

Contemporary Byzantine archaeologists design their projects around focused research questions, seeking to develop models and test general hypotheses particular to their chosen subjects. In general, the new Byzantine archaeology aims to document and explain the social, economic, and cultural development of the Eastern Roman state and society through time. Archaeologists therefore not only seek to reconstruct the Byzantine past, and to better understand how the Byzantines lived and thought, they also aim to understand the human and natural processes that created the archaeological record. By doing so, archaeologists explore settlement patterns, communications, and human interactions with the environment in order to elucidate social, ideological, and economic systems, and to explain cultural, political, and religious change. Questions of causation and change in Byzantine archaeology, drawing linkages between archaeological phenomena and known historical events, therefore remain key issues of interpretation (Gregory 1994). The Byzantine archaeologist must also be cognizant of neighboring archaeologies, such as those of the states and peoples of the Balkans, Seljuk- and Ottoman-ruled Anatolia, and Western Europe (particularly southern Italy), where historical and cultural overlap, and commercial and artistic connections, deeply inform the material culture.

## SOURCES: HISTORICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL

---

Historical sources for Byzantine archaeology can embrace the entire range of written documents from the era, notably historiography, cadastral (geographic) and economic documents, hagiography, and ecclesiastical records, such as *Notitia* (episcopal lists) and the *Acta* (Acts) of Church councils. These written sources can be augmented with epigraphic documents, being principally (but not exclusively) lapidary inscriptions, and



inscribed lead seals. Archaeological source materials can be recovered by field survey and excavation techniques. The best preserved (and thus most studied) remnants of Byzantine civilization are its churches, and ecclesiastical sites still feature prominently in contemporary Byzantine archaeology, but today's archaeological sources can encompass all physical remains of human activity, often referred to as material culture, such as built structures, smaller constructions or features, and manufactured or modified artifacts (pottery, glass, metalwork, textiles, coins, lead seals, small finds of stone, bone, or wood). More recently, ecofacts such as organic remains (such as bones, pollen, seeds, and mollusk shells) have been studied to shed light on agriculture, diet, and disease. Environmental samples (including ice cores, tree rings, and lake cores) have been used to investigate the historic environment and climate.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY AND THEORY: FIELDWORK AND INTERPRETATION

---

Contemporary Byzantine archaeology is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field, bringing together historians, archaeologists, art historians, and scientists, and encompassing a wide range of practical and scientific methodologies for the recovery and interpretation of its data. It also employs theoretical and philosophical approaches to frame the interpretation of its sources, drawing heavily upon other archaeologies and the related academic fields of cultural and physical anthropology, sociology, historical geography, art history, and history (Renfrew and Bahn 2016).

Compared with other archaeologies, Byzantine archaeology remains significantly under-theorized. The theoretical debates set in motion by the advent of the “New Archaeology” in Britain and the United States since the 1960s have had little impact upon Byzantine archaeology until comparatively recently (Rautman 1990; Athanassopoulos 2016). Efforts have been made to theorize the archaeology of the Late Antique era (Lavan and Bowden 2003), and that of the “Dark Ages” period of 600–900 (e.g., Gregory 1994; Decker 2016, 38–42), but the archaeology of the Middle and Late Byzantine periods has yet to be incorporated into these broader archaeological and historiographical debates (Kourelis 2011–2012).

Historical research forms an essential framework for archaeological investigation of a region or site, so the Byzantine archaeologist must apply the *apparatus criticus* of a historian in the proper analysis of written sources. Beyond issues of the very survival of these sources, Byzantine archaeologists must be aware of systemic imbalances in the distribution and focus of Byzantine texts. Most Byzantine authors preferred to focus on the imperial capital, so in the provinces one must often be content with a bald historical narrative based on considerably fewer sources. Similarly, Byzantine written sources offer abundant evidence for the archaeologist concerned with the elites of state and church, but they offer far less about the lives of the general population desired by

some archaeologists. Following the rules of Classical rhetoric, Byzantine authors tended to write stylized, literary descriptions (sing. *ekphrasis*) of monuments, art works, and buildings that were poetic and often deeply personal evocations rather than the systematic, forensic descriptions preferred by modern archaeologists (Ousterhout 2019, xxiv–xxv). Even the *De Aedificiis* (*On Buildings*) of Procopius, which is a highly detailed and indispensable account of Emperor Justinian I's building program, is a panegyric that is often keener to laud the greatness of the imperial patron over the facts of his commissions (Ousterhout 2019, 165–66, 219). Byzantine documentary sources in the forms of state, church, or monastic archives, imperial and monastic charters (*typika*), private wills, etc., can offer the archaeologist firmer *realia* to use alongside the material evidence, but these do not survive in quantity until after the eleventh century, and their geographical distribution favors Constantinople and the lands of modern Greece more than Anatolian Turkey (OHBS 2008, 128–43).

The archaeologist (and historian) should therefore not be tempted to privilege texts over the archaeology, reducing the archaeological evidence to a subordinate supporting, illustrative, or confirmatory role (Moreland 2006). Instead, texts and material evidence should be in critical dialogue, and Byzantine archaeology should be regarded as an autonomous discipline that provides a different kind of narrative, revealing long-term social, cultural, economic, and demographic patterns otherwise unrecorded, or beyond the scope of the written sources. Byzantine archaeology therefore has the potential to write a new kind of material culture history of Byzantium—one that engages with, expands upon, and critiques the historical narrative provided by texts.

Archaeological fieldwork has two principal methods of data collection: field survey, usually based on noninvasive surface prospection in combination with historical and archival records to model human settlement and land use through time; and excavation, which entails the physical removal of archaeological layers at a specific site or monument to reveal the history of its Byzantine era occupation (for case studies of field methods see Lavan and Mulyran 2012).

In Greece and Turkey, excavations and field surveys can be conducted with permits by faculty at local universities and by archaeological authorities based at museums, the latter being also responsible for rescue excavations and for chance finds. Reports on state-sponsored excavations of the Greek regional archaeological units or *ephorias* appear in the annual *Chronika* volumes of the *Archaiologikon Deltion* (*Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* or *Archaeological Bulletin*). Another important Greek journal is the *Deltion* of the Christian Archaeological Society (*DChAE*) published since 1892. In Turkey, preliminary reports on Turkish and foreign projects appear in the annual *Archaeological Symposium Proceedings* and *Research Symposium Proceedings* (*Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* and *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı*). Foreign archaeological schools in Greece and Turkey and foreign universities conduct research activities under permit. Some of their projects, such as Ephesus and Corinth, have been underway for over a century, and have published highly significant series of final reports.

Field surveys can take place in an urban or rural landscape. An urban survey requires systematic human prospection and recording of architectural remains and

archaeological features in the modern urban landscape, as well as stray finds such as carved stones (Dark and Özgümiş 2013). Rural landscape surveys are necessarily on a larger scale and so usually combine strategic and random sampling in the field to record known monuments and identify new sites. Data can be gathered by architectural survey and by field-walking, gathering surface pottery and finds to identify and date settlement sites (e.g., Bintliff 2000 and 2013). Ideally, a landscape survey should be combined with a site excavation as a reference for local ceramic chronologies, since these are often poorly known and so can be difficult to identify and precisely date (Vroom 2018). Similarly, a survey of the area surrounding an excavated site can provide a useful regional context for its occupation. Scientific methods using magnetometer resistivity or ground-penetrating radar can also be used on promising sites to detect buried archaeological features. Such a noninvasive site survey is usually considered preliminary to controlled excavation. Topographical survey of the landscape can now be combined with satellite photography and GIS (Global Information Systems) technology, which can record sites and model land-use, and Lidar aerial photography, which can digitally strip away vegetation to reveal concealed structures and field systems. Scientific sampling of pollen cores from lake beds, dendrochronological samples, speleothems in caves, and even glacial ice cores can also be used in combination with written sources to reconstruct historic climate and land use in order to place Byzantine settlements and historical developments in their geographical context (Haldon, Elton, and Newhard 2018).

Excavation is more expensive and is most effective as a long-term commitment that can provide detailed information about a particular site and its history. Byzantine archaeological sites cover a wide range of types, but the most common are rural agrarian settlements or villages, religious communities or monasteries, military sites such as fortresses, and larger settlements, classified as cities or towns depending upon their legal status, form, and function. Underwater sites are primarily shipwrecks and harbors.

Stratigraphic excavation and recording by context is widely recognized as the best method to study archaeological sites (although this does not mean that outdated and far less effective methods of non-stratigraphic excavation are not still practiced). In stratigraphic excavation, each occupational layer, structure, and feature is carefully excavated and recorded as a separate archaeological “context” in the reverse order of their deposition. This enables archaeologists to establish a relative chronological sequence based on analysis of the vertical and horizontal spatial relationships of these contexts one to another. This archaeological stratigraphy can be represented schematically by drawn sections or cuts through these layers, or in the form of a dendrogram called a Harris matrix. Excavation trenches are planned horizontally within a measured grid laid out over the site, which can be excavated as individual boxes, or as an unimpeded or open excavation with running sections (Bowkett et. al 2001; Sanders, James, and Carter Johnson 2017).

Historical testimonia or an inscription can help provide exact, absolute dates for some Byzantine monuments, but this is rare for excavated sites (Mango 2008). Radiocarbon dating of organic remains is used in Byzantine archaeology, and absolute dating by means of dendrochronology (tree rings) has mainly benefited studies of standing

monuments, but it has also helped date excavated features (Kuniholm and Striker 1987; Kuniholm 2008). More usual, however, is relative dating by stratigraphic context and the associated pottery and other finds, which can be relatively dated according to stratigraphic location, and their association with other datable artifacts, such as coins. This method can provide relative dates ranging over quarter centuries or decades, and can provide chronological *termini ante quem* or *post quem* (dates “before which,” or “after which”) for archaeological contexts as part of a stratigraphic sequence (Bowkett et. al 2001; Sanders, James, and Carter Johnson 2017).

Stratigraphic recording is essential for the creation of relative chronologies of ceramics and other artifacts to date occupational phases. Our knowledge of the Late Roman–Early Byzantine slipped wares of the fourth to seventh century in the Mediterranean is particularly well developed (Hayes 1972; Reynolds 2010; and useful survey by Moore 2019), but few Greek or Turkish sites have produced detailed pottery sequences for the “Dark Ages” period of ca. 600–900, and many pottery products of the period from 900–1100 still remain poorly understood. In general, more studies have been made of painted, impressed, and inscribed (sgraffito) glazed wares, than of unglazed cooking wares, and coarse, burnished, plain, and plain painted table wares, particularly for the period 1100–1500 (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999 and chapter, this volume; Sanders 2000; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004). Similarly, more is known of the pottery products of major cities and coastal areas than of rural and interior regions, and contentious issues of pottery chronologies remain. Significant studies have appeared on the early medieval pottery of Amorium, and on Middle and Late Byzantine pottery excavated in Istanbul, Corinth, Sparta, Myra-Demre, and other Turkish, Greek, and Mediterranean sites (Hayes 1992; Sanders 2000; Vroom 2003; Böhlendorf-Arslan, Uysal, and Witte-Orr 2007; Türker 2009; Ivison 2012; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2012; Vroom 2017). Recent studies of small artifacts, or “small finds,” and of glassware and metalwork, have increased our knowledge of their significance in the Byzantine economy, but much still remains to be done to refine these artifact chronologies (Böhlendorf-Arslan and Ricci 2012; see useful overview of “Dark Ages” material culture by Decker, 2016, 43–79). Exceptionally, destruction layers at Amorium can be securely dated to the Arab sack of 838, thus providing a fixed datum for the little-known material culture of the early ninth century (Ivison 2012).

## TRENDS IN SCHOLARSHIP SINCE 1960

---

The decades since 1960 saw the gradual emergence of a new archaeological sensibility, embracing new techniques, approaches, and source materials. This progression has been slow and uneven, but some key areas of study have emerged.

The archaeology and topography of Constantinople remains a core subject. These studies follow a well-beaten philological approach using texts, but there are also new surveys and rescue excavations, albeit competing with rapid urban development

and destruction (Müller-Wiener 1977; Dark and Özgümüş 2013, 6–11). Monographs documenting churches continue to appear, some of which also seek to relate architecture to liturgy (Peschlow 1977; Westphalen 1998, a good example of “archival archaeology” following the destruction of the church; Mathews 1971; Marinis 2014), and there has been renewed interest in the archaeology of Hagia Sophia (Mainstone 1988; Guidobaldi and Barsanti 2004; Teteriatnikov 2017; Taddei 2017; Dark and Kostenec 2019). The publications of the excavations at Saraçhane (Harrison 1986; Hayes 1992) and Kalenderhane Camii (Striker and Kuban 1997 and 2007) set new standards for the stratigraphical study of ecclesiastical and urban sites, with the detailed publication of pottery, small finds, human bones, and organic remains. New studies of brick stamps and polychrome ceramic tiles have also offered new chronological markers and new insights on interior decoration for many monuments (Bardill 2004; Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001). Palatine archaeology underwent a revival in the 1990s and 2000s with new surveys, excavations and conservation projects, and museum exhibitions on the Great Palace and other imperial residences, and with a renewed interest in the material culture of the imperial court (e.g., Denker et. al 2011; Ödekan, Necipoğlu, and Akyürek 2013). However, the most important excavations in Istanbul have been the rescue digs ahead of the new Metro, which have produced incredibly rich finds and thirty-six Byzantine shipwrecks (Karamani Pekin 2007; Kızıltan and Baran Çelik 2013). Important surveys of the city’s infrastructure, in particular its water supply and harbors, have also appeared (Crow, Bardill, and Bayliss 2008; Daim 2016).

Beyond Istanbul, a new urban archaeology emerged since the 1970s, tracing how Late Antique cities such as Ephesus, Sardis, Miletus, and Aphrodisias were transformed by processes of Christianization, and other urban, cultural, and social changes (Dally and Ratté 2011; Daim and Ladstätter 2011). Urban change came to be viewed in terms of discontinuity and continuity: the ending of civic institutions and the pagan cults of the Classical Roman *polis*, and the creation of Christianized cities shaped by the construction of churches and new urban developments. In this regard, urban archaeology became part of the debates in the new field of Late Antiquity as championed by Peter Brown (Saradi 2006, esp. 13–45, 441–71).

Since the 1990s, more Late Antique cities in Turkey have been subject to extensive excavation and survey, notably Hierapolis, Laodicea, Sagalassus, and Elaiussa Sebaste. These excavations have shown that even as some cities changed and flourished during the fifth and sixth centuries, some had already begun to decline and some new urban settlements were founded (Arthur 2006; Equini Schneider 2010; Şimşek and Kaçar 2018; Jacobs and Elton 2019, esp. essays by Commito, Jeffery, and Wilson). These developments have been attributed to administrative, economic, cultural, and social changes since the third century, including the foundation of Constantinople (Saradi 2006).

The Early Byzantine city in Greece has also been the subject of extensive research, with a particular Greek Orthodox focus on Christian monuments. This has revealed varying urban fortunes of growth and decline, and an entirely new city founded at Thessalian Thebes/Nea Anchialos (see chapters in Albani and Chalkia 2013). Although

major cities in Macedonia and Epirus, such as Thessaloniki (a Tetrarchic and prefectural capital), Philippi, and Nicopolis were fortified and Christianized with magnificent churches in the fourth and fifth centuries, many urban sites suffered decline due to barbarian invasions from the mid-fifth century (Avraméa 1997; Sodini 2007). In the sixth century, some sites were transformed from a Classical civic *polis* into a *kastron* (or fortified administrative center), a new type of settlement that likely served as a model for later urban reorganization in Anatolia (Dunn 1994). Athens has also been the subject of considerable study, exploring the conversion of temples into churches and late paganism (Frantz 1988; Bouras 2017).

Urban decline and economic recession in the seventh and eighth centuries in Anatolia is now widely accepted. Clive Foss argued that the Persian invasions in the early seventh century precipitated the collapse of the Late Antique city (Foss 1975; Foss 1977), but greater emphasis is now placed upon the Arab invasions and imperial policies, which led to a militarized state and a new settlement hierarchy of strategic cities as fortified administrative centers (Niewöhner 2007; Decker 2016, 108–22). The dominant model remains the transformation of Late Antique “polis to (medieval) *kastron*,” characterized by urban contraction, de-urbanization, and economic simplification (sometimes called “ruralization”), but some key centers, such as Amorium and Nicaea (as well as Thessaloniki in Greece), maintained their Late Antique walls and infrastructure, and a measure of social complexity and economic diversity (Iverson 2007; Antonaras 2016).

In Greece, much attention has focused on the impact of the Slavic invasions, and on Slavic settlements and cemeteries of the late sixth and seventh centuries (Iverson 1996, 114–20; Avraméa 1997, 67–104). Our knowledge of urbanism and rural settlement between ca. 600–900 remains sketchy, although new evidence is accumulating from cities such as Gortyn on Crete, Corinth, Athens, and Thessaloniki (Frantz 1988; Gregory 1994; Zanini et al 2015; Decker 2016, 62–63, 81–108, 123–41; Konstantinidou and Miza 2020). More is known of urbanism in Greece from the ninth century onward (Kiousopoulou 2014), and particularly at Athens and Corinth, where decades of excavation have uncovered densely occupied commercial, residential, and manufacturing districts (Athanasoulis 2013; Bouras 2017). In contrast, the archaeology of Middle Byzantine urban centers in Anatolia remains underdeveloped, so arguments advanced for the general decline of Middle Byzantine urbanism before the Seljuk invasions may be premature (Niewöhner 2007, 135–38, 143–44; Niewöhner 2017, 54–59). Although some towns and cities may well have dwindled at the expense of other rural settlements and landed estates, others (such as ports and local central places) may have held their own as administrative, market, and manufacturing centers. At Amorium, for example, excavations revealed dense occupation within the new, post-838 fortified upper town, and a possible military enclosure and adjacent manufacturing district in the Lower City (Iverson 2000, 14–18; Iverson 2012). For the period of the late eleventh to fourteenth centuries, the publication of residential and commercial neighborhoods on the acropolis of Pergamon provides the most detailed evidence for urban life in Asia Minor (Rheidt 1991). In Greece, Corinth and Mystras (despite later Ottoman occupation), along with monuments in Thessaloniki

and Kastoria, offer the best archaeological perspectives on the Late Byzantine city (see Kourelis 2011–2012; chapters in Albani and Chalkia 2013).

The archaeology of city walls traditionally concentrated on their defensive functions, focusing on the documentation and classification of wall, gate, and tower forms, and dating criteria by means of inscriptions, construction history, and mortar types (Foss and Winfield 1986; see Arvanitopoulos chapter, this volume). Recent studies have sought to understand urban fortifications beyond this purely technical basis in the contexts of urbanism, society, and the state (Iverson 2000; Crow 2017). The archaeology of nonurban, rural fortified places that served as strongholds for the state or church, and, in Middle Byzantine times, as fortified residences for Byzantine aristocrats, has been less studied (Whittow 1995). Fortified residences and monasteries, and castles and towers in Frankish and Late Byzantine Greece and the Balkans have been linked to developments in Western Europe, and have been associated with the administration of landed estates (Ćurčić 2010, 510–27).

The study of ecclesiastical monuments remains true to its art historical and *Bauforschung* traditions, documenting standing buildings, along with their wall paintings, mosaics, and sculptures. Important synthetic studies have sought to bring this disparate material into a coherent architectural historical narrative (Ousterhout 1999; Ćurčić 2010; Ousterhout 2019). However, an increasingly archaeological context for understanding the evolution and changing uses of ecclesiastical complexes in their Byzantine environment is being provided by publications of church excavations, recent examples being Miletus, Sardis, Demre (St. Nicholas), Marmara Ereğlisi (Turkish Thrace), Eleutherna (Crete), and Kourion (Cyprus) (Themelis 2004; Megaw 2007; Buchwald 2015; Niewöhner 2016; Westphalen 2016; Doğan and Findık 2018).

Monastic archaeology for the Early Byzantine era remains poorly known in Greece, but is better documented in Turkey, where urban and rural monasteries exhibit regional variation in their layout and church architecture (Niewöhner 2017). Outside of Istanbul, documented later monastic sites are almost exclusively rural, as revealed by surveys in Bithynia, Mt. Latmos on the Aegean coast, and in Cappadocia, where monastic foundations have been closely linked with elite burial and commemoration (Auzépy 2003; Niewöhner 2017; Ousterhout 2017, 371–480). In Greece, still functioning monastic sites, such as Hosios Loukas in Stiris, and on Mt. Athos, have been subject to considerable architectural study, but excavations of Late Byzantine monasteries in Greek Thrace now offer an archaeological context for medieval monastic life (Ćurčić 2010, 295–307, 383–94, 595–99).

Byzantine funerary archaeology had often been regarded as subsidiary to ecclesiastical archaeology, but new publications of cemeteries have expanded its potential as a source for Byzantine society. Recent overviews have helped to outline the development of Byzantine burial practices, tomb typologies, and associated finds, and have explored issues of their interpretation for religious belief and social status (Iverson 1996; Poulou-Papadimitriou, Tzavella, and Ott 2012; Iverson 2017). Paleoanthropological studies of human remains have explored the pathology, diet, and even ethnicity of Byzantine era populations (Bourbou 2004; Demirel 2017), and archaeologists and historians have sought to trace the impact of the Justinianic Plague on the empire (essays in Little 2007).

The archaeological study of rural settlements, such as villages, monasteries, and fortresses, and their agricultural economies, have made important contributions to our understanding of economy and society in the Byzantine provinces (Geyer and Lefort 2003; Lefort, Morrisson, and Sodini 2005). In Greece, Middle and Late Byzantine rural settlement is better known, thanks to standing remains and rich archival documentation, such as in Macedonia and the Morea (Kravari 1989; Gerstel 2013; Gerstel 2015). In southern Anatolia, Early Byzantine rural settlement and economic patterns are the best documented archaeologically (Severin and Grossmann 2003), but Middle Byzantine agricultural communities have been excavated in central Anatolia at Boğazköy and Çadar Hüyük (Izdebski 2013; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2017; Cassis 2017; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2019). Some of the most significant recent work has been carried out in Cappadocia, where new surveys and excavations have overturned old notions of this region as an exclusively monastic landscape, and have peopled it with villages, towns, fortresses, and aristocratic mansions (Ousterhout 2017).

In recent decades, archaeological excavation and survey evidence has revolutionized our understanding of the Byzantine economy. Excavations at Corinth, Thessaloniki, and Amorium have greatly elucidated the production of pottery, glass, and other manufactured goods in cities, along with agricultural processing, animal husbandry, and wine-making (Sanders 2000; Ivison 2012; Lightfoot and Ivison 2012; Antonaras 2016). Excavated pottery, animal bones, and floral remains are being studied in combination with environmental, archaeological, and historical data to reconstruct local agricultural and food economies, as well as diet, eating habits, and even cookery (Ioannidou 2012; Trépanier 2014; Vroom 2018). The identification of ceramic production centers; of the geographical distributions of pottery, shipwrecks, and other manufactured goods; and of bulk containers such as amphorae containing commodities such as oil, grain, and wine has enabled the reconstruction of trade networks in the empire and beyond (Morrisson 2012). Coinage has also been studied from the perspective of circulation and monetary economy, based on excavated finds (Morrisson 2017). Maritime archaeology has made significant contributions to this understanding with publications of shipwrecks and their cargoes since the 1960s (Carlson, Leidwanger, and Kampbell 2015). Of especial importance for the economy of Constantinople and its empire are the excavations of the Harbor of Theodosius at Yenikapı in Istanbul, which should revolutionize our understanding of shipping and commerce in the capital (Karamani Pekin 2007; Kızıltan and Baran Çelik 2013; Daim 2016).

Increasingly important in such reconstructions of the Byzantine economy and regional histories are surveys combining historical geography and landscape history (such as Koder 2017). Foundational to this approach are the ongoing publications of the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (*TIB*), which since 1976 has sought to create a historical atlas of the Byzantine world, region by region. The publications of the *TIB* provide a historical framework for each region surveyed, detailing roads, settlements, resources, and gazetteers of archaeological sites. Building on the work of the *TIB*, a new, integrated, and interdisciplinary approach to field survey emerged. In Greece, this is perhaps best exemplified by the Boeotia Survey (Bintliff 2000; Bintliff 2013), and



in Turkey by the Avkat Archaeological Survey (Haldon, Elton, and Newhard 2018). These surveys combined traditional field survey methods with a comprehensive approach to the landscape history of the surrounding regions, using historical data, and in the case of the Avkat Archaeological Project, GIS, digital spatial technologies, and other scientific data to reveal land-use patterns through time. Combining such interdisciplinary regional surveys and site excavations with long-range environmental and climatological data is creating a new field of Byzantine environmental and landscape history (Izdebski and Mulryan 2019). Such work has identified significant changes in land-use and agricultural practice in Anatolia during the seventh and eighth centuries that have been attributed to Arab invasions, imperial policy, and social and climatic changes (Izdebski 2013; Decker 2016, 148–54; Haldon 2016, 214–48).

## THE STATE OF THE FIELD AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

---

Broader trends over more than a century show that the ambitions of scholars have expanded from the empirical documentation of individual monuments to the scientific excavation of settlement sites, and now to the interpretation of entire Byzantine landscapes, seeking to integrate all known monuments, and historical and archaeological sources into a single interpretive matrix. Challenges remain in terms of basic documentation and dating of archaeological materials. More city centers have been excavated than rural settlements, and monumental edifices and churches remain the best published Byzantine buildings, as compared with secular domestic, industrial, or even military structures. Coverage of pottery and small find chronologies is very uneven across countries and regions, and there are still significant gaps in our knowledge. Despite this, the discovery and publication of Byzantine archaeological sites in Greece and Turkey have seen a welcome increase in quantity and quality since the 1980s. The archaeological report and monograph will continue to be the principal publication formats, but rising production costs is also encouraging a growth in online, digital publications (for example, Haldon, Elton, and Newhard 2018, 7). Computer-generated digital reconstructions and virtual simulations of Byzantine archaeological sites and buildings are also becoming more common. These collaborative projects can not only help archaeologists better visualize the Byzantine material world, they can also popularize it as well (Kostenec and Öner 2007; *Byzantium1200*; *Byzantium1200/videos*).

Despite this recent exponential increase in excavation and survey, publications, and a greater public interest, a unified approach to Byzantine archaeology in general has yet to be fulfilled. Modern political and linguistic geography, along with nationalist and religious perceptions of Byzantium, have promoted a fragmentation and silofication of archaeological scholarship, slowing integration in the field and the dissemination of knowledge (Decker 2016, 33). This situation has been mitigated somewhat in recent

decades by translations, and by the increasing numbers of international and regional conferences. Also welcome are efforts to standardize and thus better professionalize the field through multilingual handbooks of technical terms in architecture and sculpture (Kalopissi-Verti and Panayotidi-Kesisoglou 2017; Niewöhner 2021).

In 1994, Enrico Zanini published the first modern handbook of Byzantine archaeology, but sadly this pioneering work remains out of print and hard to find (Zanini 1994). Two useful practical handbooks on archaeological field methods for Classical through Byzantine period sites in Greece have been published (Bowkett et. al 2001; Sanders, James, and Carter Johnson 2017). Short summations of the field have appeared in other handbooks and encyclopedias (Brandenburg 1992; Crow 2008; Wischmeyer 2017), but as of 2019, there is no trade handbook specifically devoted to the sources, theory, methods, practice, and issues of Byzantine archaeology akin to those published for world or Western medieval archaeologies (such as Campbell-Graham 2007; Renfrew and Bahn 2016). There have been useful steps in this direction, however, with the recent appearance of publications seeking to bring together overviews of archaeological sites and materials, or to provide archaeological syntheses of a particular historical period or region (Daim and Drauschke 2010a and 2010b; Albani and Chalkia 2013; Decker 2016; Niewöhner 2017; Ousterhout 2017; Horster, Nicolaou, and Rogge 2018; Jacobs and Elton 2019). Digital initiatives, such as the *Digital Tabula Imperii Byzantini* project (*Dig-TIB*), can also make access to data easier and new research possible. Such works could help lay a new evidential and methodological foundation for future Byzantine archaeology that can serve both scholars and students alike.

## REFERENCES

- Albani, J., and E. Chalkia, eds. 2013. *Heaven and Earth—Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece* (Athens).
- Antonaras, A. Ch. 2016. *Arts, Crafts and Trades in Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki: Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence. Byzanz zwischen Orient und Occident 2* (Mainz).
- Arthur, P. 2006. *Byzantine and Turkish Hierapolis (Pamukkale): An Archaeological Guide* (Istanbul).
- Athanasoulis, D. 2013. “Corinth.” In *Heaven and Earth—Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece*, edited by J. Albani and E. Chalkia, 192–209 (Athens).
- Athanassopoulos, E. F. 2016. “Medieval Archaeology in Greece: A Historical Overview.” In *Archaeology and History in Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece: Studies on Method and Meaning in Honor of Timothy E. Gregory*, edited by W. R. Caraher, L. Jones Hall, and R. Scott Moore, 15–36 (Abingdon and New York).
- Auzépy, M-F. 2003. “Les monastères.” In *La Bithynie au Moyen Âge: 9. Réalités byzantines*, edited by B. Geyer and J. Lefort, 431–58 (Paris).
- Avraméa, A. 1997. *Le Péloponnèse du IV<sup>e</sup> au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Changements et persistances. Byzantina Sorbonensia 15* (Paris).
- Bardill, J. 2004. *Brickstamps of Constantinople* (Oxford and New York).

- Bintliff, J. 2000. "Reconstructing the Byzantine Countryside: New Approaches from Landscape Archaeology." In *Byzanz als Raum*, edited by K. Belke, F. Hild, J. Koder, and P. Soustal, 37–63 (Vienna).
- Bintliff, J. 2013. "The Contribution of Surface Survey to Byzantine Landscape History in Greece." In *Exempli Gratia: Sagalassos, Marc Waelkens and Interdisciplinary Archaeology*, edited by J. Poblome, 127–40 (Leuven).
- Böhlendorf-Arslan, B. 2004. *Glasierte byzantinische Keramik aus der Türkei*, 3 vols. (Istanbul).
- Böhlendorf-Arslan, B. 2012. "Pottery from the Destruction Contexts in the Enclosure." In *Amorium Reports 3. The Lower City Enclosure: Finds Reports and Technical Studies*, edited by C. S. Lightfoot and E. A. Ivison, 153–79 (Istanbul).
- Böhlendorf-Arslan, B. 2017. "Boğazköy." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 361–67 (Oxford and New York).
- Böhlendorf-Arslan, B. 2019. *Die Oberstadt von Hattuša: Die mittelbyzantinische Siedlung in Boğazköy. Fallstudie zum Alltagsleben in einem anatolischen Dorf zwischen dem 10. und 12. Jahrhundert. Boğazköy-Hattuša 26* (Berlin).
- Böhlendorf-Arslan, B., and A. Ricci, eds. 2012. *Byzantine Small Finds in Archaeological Contexts. Byzas 15* (Istanbul).
- Böhlendorf-Arslan, B., A. O. Uysal, and H. Witte-Orr, eds. 2007. *Çanak: Late Antique and Medieval Pottery and Tiles in Mediterranean Archaeological Contexts. Byzas 7* (Istanbul).
- Bouras, Ch. 2017. *Byzantine Athens, 10th–12th Centuries* (Abingdon and New York).
- Bourbou, C. 2004. *The People of Early Byzantine Eleutherna and Messene (6th–7th ce. A.D.): A Bioarchaeological Approach* (Athens).
- Bowkett, L. C., et. al 2001. *Classical Archaeology in the Field: Approaches* (London and New York).
- Brandenburg, H. 1992. "Archaeology, Christian." In *Encyclopedia of the Early Church, I. A.*, edited by Di Bernadino, 68–70 (New York).
- Buchwald, H. 2015. Churches EA and E at Sardis. *Exploration of Sardis, Reports 6* (Cambridge, MA, and London).
- Byzantium1200*. <http://byzantium1200.com/>
- Byzantium1200/videos*. <https://www.youtube.com/user/Byzantium1200/videos>
- Carlson, D.N., J. Leidwanger, and S. M. Kampbell, eds. 2015. *Maritime Studies in the Wake of the Byzantine Shipwreck at Yassıada, Turkey* (College Station, TX).
- Cassis, M. 2017. "Çadar Hüyük." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 368–74 (Oxford and New York).
- Christie, N. and S. T. Loseby. 1996. *Towns in Transition. Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT)
- Crow, J. 2008. "Archaeology." In *OHBS*, 47–58.
- Crow, J. 2017. "Fortifications." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 90–108 (Oxford and New York).
- Crow, J., J. Bardill, and R. Bayliss 2008. *The Water Supply of Byzantine Constantinople*. *Journal of Roman Studies Monograph II* (London).
- Ćurčić, S. 2010. *Architecture in the Balkans: From Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent, c. 300–1550* (New Haven and London).
- Daim, F., ed. 2016. *Die byzantinischen Häfen Konstantinopels. Byzanz zwischen Orient und Occident 4* (Mainz).
- Daim, F., and J. Drauschke, eds. 2010a. *Byzanz—das Römerreich im Mittelalter. Teil 2, 1 Schauplätze* (Mainz).

- Daim, F., and J. Drauschke, eds. 2010b. *Byzanz—das Römerreich im Mittelalter*. Teil 2, 2 *Schauplätze* (Mainz).
- Daim, F., and S. Ladstätter, eds. 2011. *Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit* (Mainz).
- Dally, O., and C. Ratté, eds. 2011. *Archaeology and the Cities of Asia Minor in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor).
- Dalton, O. M. 1911. *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford).
- Dark, K., and J. Kostenec. 2019. *Hagia Sophia in Context: An Archaeological Re-Examination of the Cathedral of Byzantine Constantinople* (Oxford and Philadelphia).
- Dark, K., and F. Özgümüş. 2013. *Constantinople: Archaeology of a Byzantine Megapolis* (Oxford and Oakville, CT).
- Decker, J. M. 2016. *The Byzantine Dark Ages* (London and New York).
- Demirel, F. A. 2017. "Human Remains." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 60–70 (Oxford and New York).
- Denker, A., et. al 2011. *Byzantine Palaces in Istanbul* (Istanbul).
- Dig-TIB. *Digital Tabula Imperii Byzantini*. <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/index.php?seite=digtib>
- Doğan, S., and E. F. Findik, eds. 2018. *Aziz Nikolaos Kilisesi Kazıları 1989–2009* (Istanbul).
- Dunn, A. W. 1994. "The Transition from Polis to Kastron in the Balkans (III-VII cc.): General and Regional Perspectives." *BMGS* 18: 60–80.
- Equini Schneider, E., ed. 2010. *Elaiussa Sebaste III: L'Agora Romana* (Istanbul).
- Foss, C. 1975. "The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity." *English Historical Review* 90: 721–47.
- Foss, C. 1977. "Archaeology and the 'Twenty Cities' of Asia Minor." *AJA* 81: 469–86.
- Foss, C., and D. Winfield. 1986. *Byzantine Fortifications: An Introduction* (Pretoria).
- Frantz, A. 1988. *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700. The Athenian Agora* 24 (Princeton).
- Frend, W. H. C. 1996. *The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History* (London).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., ed. 2013. *Viewing the Morea. Land and People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese* (Washington, DC).
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 2015. *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium. Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography* (Cambridge and New York).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and J. A. Lauffenburger. 2001. *A Lost Art Rediscovered: The Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium* (Philadelphia).
- Geyer, B., and J. Lefort, eds. 2003. *La Bithynie au Moyen Âge*. 9. *Réalités byzantines* (Paris).
- Graham-Campbell, J., ed. 2007. *The Archaeology of Medieval Europe*, Vol. 1: *The Eighth to Twelfth Centuries AD* (Aarhus).
- Gregory, T. E. 1994. "Archaeology and Theoretical Considerations in the Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages in the Aegean Region." In *Beyond the Site: Regional Studies in the Aegean Area*, edited by P. N. Kardulias, 137–59 (Lanham, MD).
- Guidobaldi, A. G., and C. Barsanti, eds. 2004. *Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli: L'arredo marmoreo della Grande Chiesa giustiniana* (Vatican City).
- Haldon, J. 2016. *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740* (Cambridge, MA, and London).
- Haldon, J., H. Elton, and J. Newhard, eds. 2018. *Archaeology and Urban Settlement in Late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Euchaita-Avkat-Beyözü and Its Environment* (Cambridge).
- Harrison, R. M., ed. 1986. *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, 1. *The Excavations* (Princeton).
- Hayes, J. W. 1972. *Late Roman Pottery* (London).
- Hayes, J. W. 1992. *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, 2. *The Pottery* (Princeton).

- Horster, M., D. Nicolaou, and S. Rogge, eds. 2018. *Church Building in Cyprus (Fourth to Seventh Centuries): A Mirror of Intercultural Contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Münster and New York).
- Ioannidou, E. 2012. "Animal Husbandry." In *Amorium Reports 3. The Lower City Enclosure: Finds Reports and Technical Studies*, edited by C. S. Lightfoot and E. A. Ivison, 419–42 (Istanbul).
- Ivison, E. A. 1996. "Burial and Urbanism at Late Antique and Early Byzantine Corinth (c. AD 400–700)." In *Towns in Transition. Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, edited by N. Christie and S.T. Loseby, 99–125 (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT)
- Ivison, E. A. 2000. "Urban Renewal and Imperial Revival in Byzantium (730–1025)." *ByzForsch* 26: 1–46.
- Ivison, E. A. 2007. "Amorium in the Byzantine Dark Ages (Seventh to Ninth Centuries)." In *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. 2. Byzantium, Pliska and the Balkans. Millennium Studies* 5, 2, edited by J. Henning, 24–59 (Berlin and New York).
- Ivison, E. A. 2012. "Excavations in the Lower City Enclosure, 1996–2008." In *Amorium Reports 3. The Lower City Enclosure. Finds Reports and Technical Studies*, edited by C. S. Lightfoot and E. A. Ivison, 4–151 (Istanbul).
- Ivison, E.A. 2017. "Funerary Archaeology." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 160–75 (Oxford and New York).
- Izdebski, A. 2013. *A Rural Economy in Transition: Asia Minor from Late Antiquity into the Early Middle Ages* (Warsaw).
- Izdebski A., and M. Mulryan, eds. 2019. *Environment and Society in the Long Late Antiquity* (Leiden and Boston).
- Jacobs, I., and H. Elton, eds. 2019. *Asia Minor in the Long Sixth Century: Current Research and Future Directions* (Oxford and Philadelphia).
- Kalopissi-Verti, S., and M. Panayotidi-Kesisoglou. 2017. *Multilingual Illustrated Dictionary of Byzantine Architecture and Sculpture Terminology* (Herakleio).
- Karamani Pekin, A., ed. 2007. *Istanbul: 8000 Years Brought to Daylight. Marmaray, Metro, Sultanahmet Excavations* (Istanbul).
- Kiousopoulou, T., ed. 2014. *Οι βυζαντινές πόλεις (8ος–15ος αιώνας). Προοπτικές της έρευνας και νέες ερμηνευτικές προσεγγίσεις* (Rethymno).
- Kızıltan, Z., and G. Baran Çelik, eds. 2013. *Stories from the Hidden Harbor: Shipwrecks of Yenikapı* (Istanbul).
- Koder, J. 2017. "Historical Geography." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 9–27 (Oxford and New York).
- Konstantinidou, K. and M. Miza. 2020. "Μεταμορφώσεις του αστικού τοπίου της Θεσσαλονίκης από τον 4ο στον 9ο αιώνα στη διασταύρωση του decumanus maximus με τον cardo της οδού Βενιζέλου (Ανασκαφή σταθμού Βενιζέλου - μετρό Θεσσαλονίκης)." *DChAE*, Series 4, 41: 9–34.
- Kostenec, J., and T. Öner. 2007. *Walking thru Byzantium: Great Palace Region*. 2nd ed. (Istanbul).
- Kourelis, K. 2011–2012. "Byzantine Houses and Modern Fictions: Domesticating Mystras in 1930s Greece." *DOP* 65/66: 297–331.
- Kravari, V., ed. 1989. *Villes et villages de Macédoie occidentale. 2. Réalités byzantines* (Paris).
- Kuniholm, P. I. 2008. "Dendrochronology." In *OHBS*, 182–92.
- Kuniholm, P., and C. L. Striker. 1987. "Dendrochronological Investigations in the Aegean and Neighboring Regions, 1983–1986." *Journal of Field Archaeology* 14: 385–98.

- Lavan, L., and W. Bowden, eds. 2003. *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology. Late Antique Archaeology 1* (Leiden and Boston).
- Lavan, L., and M. Mulyran, eds. 2012. *Field Methods and Post-Excavation Techniques in Late Antique Archaeology. Late Antique Archaeology 9* (Leiden and Boston).
- Lefort, J., C. Morrisson, and J-P. Sodini 2005. *Les Villages dans l'Empire byzantin (IV<sup>e</sup> -XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. 11. *Réalités byzantines* (Paris).
- Lightfoot, C. S., and E. A. Ivison, eds. 2012. *Amorium Reports 3. The Lower City Enclosure: Finds, Reports and Technical Studies* (Istanbul).
- Little, L. K., ed. 2007. *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541–750* (Cambridge and New York).
- Mango, C. 2008. "Epigraphy." In *OHBS*, 144–49.
- Mainstone, R. J. 1988. *Hagia Sophia. Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (New York).
- Marinis, V. 2014. *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople. Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries* (Cambridge).
- Mathews, T. F. 1971. *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park and London).
- Megaw, A. H. S., ed. 2007. *Kourion. Excavations in the Episcopal Precinct* (Washington, DC).
- Moore, R. S. 2019. "Pottery." In *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Archaeology*, edited by D. K. Pettegrew, W. R. Caraher, and T. W. Davis, 297–312 (Oxford and New York).
- Moreland, J. 2006. "Archaeology and Texts: Subsistence or Enlightenment." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25: 135–51.
- Morrisson, C., ed. 2012. *Trade and Markets in Byzantium* (Washington, DC).
- Morrisson, C. 2017. "Coins." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 71–81 (Oxford and New York).
- Müller-Wiener, W. 1977. *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen).
- Neumann, D. 2002. "Teaching the History of Architecture in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland: 'Architekturgeschichte' vs. 'Bauforschung.'" *JSAH* 61, 3: 370–80.
- Niewöhner, P. 2007. "Archäologie und die 'Dunklen Jahrhunderte' im byzantinischen Anatolien." In *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. 2. Byzantium, Pliska and the Balkans. Millennium Studies 5/2*, edited by J. Henning, 119–57 (Berlin and New York).
- Niewöhner, P. 2016. *Die byzantinischen Basiliken von Milet* Milet I, 11 (Berlin).
- Niewöhner, P., ed. 2017. *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks* (Oxford and New York).
- Niewöhner, P. 2017a. "Monasteries." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 119–28 (Oxford and New York).
- Niewöhner, P. 2017b. "Urbanism." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 39–59 (Oxford and New York).
- Niewöhner, P. 2021. *Byzantine Ornaments in Stone. Architectural Sculpture and Liturgical Furnishings* (Berlin).
- Ödekan, A., N. Necipoğlu, and E. Akyürek, eds. 2013. *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium* (Istanbul).
- OHBS.
- Ousterhout, R. 1999. *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Ousterhout, R. G. 2011. "The Rediscovery of Constantinople and the Beginnings of Byzantine Archaeology: A Historiographic Survey." In *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology*

- in *the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914*, edited by Z. Bahrani, Z. Çelik, and E. Eldem, 181–211 (Istanbul).
- Ousterhout, R. G. 2017. *Visualizing Community: Art, Material Culture, and Settlement in Byzantine Cappadocia* (Washington, DC).
- Ousterhout, R. G. 2019. *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (Oxford and New York).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D., ed. 1999. *Byzantine Glazed Ceramics. The Art of Sgraffito* (Athens).
- Peschlow, U. 1977. *Die Irenenkirche in Istanbul: Untersuchungen zur Architektur*. *IstMitt*, 18 (Tübingen).
- Pettegrew, D. K., W. R. Caraher, and T. W. Davis, eds. 2019. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Archaeology* (Oxford and New York).
- Poulou-Papadimitriou, N., E. Tzavella, and J. Ott. 2012. “Burial Practices in Byzantine Greece: Archaeological Evidence and Methodological Problems for Its Interpretation.” In *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe. Archaeological and Historical Evidence I*, edited by M. Salamon et. al, 377–428 (Krakow, Leipzig, Rzeszow, and Warsaw).
- Rautman, M. L. 1990. “Archaeology and Byzantine Studies.” *ByzForsch* 15: 137–65.
- Renfrew, C., and P. Bahn. 2016. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. 7th ed. (London).
- Reynolds, P. 2010. *Hispania and the Roman Mediterranean, AD 100–700: Ceramics and Trade* (London).
- Rheidt, K. 1991. *Die Stadtgrabung: Die byzantinische Wohnstadt. Altertümer von Pergamon XV*, 2 (Berlin).
- Sanders, G. 2000. “New Relative and Absolute Chronologies for 9th to 13th Century Glazed Wares at Corinth: Methodology and Social Conclusions.” In *Byzanz als Raum: Zu Methoden und Inhalten der historischen Geographie des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes*, edited by K. Belke et. al, 153–73 (Vienna).
- Sanders, G. D. R., S. A. James, and A. Carter Johnson. 2017. *Corinth Excavations Archaeological Manual* (Grand Forks, ND).
- Saradi, H.G. 2006. *The Byzantine City in the Sixth Century. Literary Images and Historical Reality*. Society of Messenian Archaeological Studies (Athens).
- Severin, H-G., and P. Grossmann. 2003. *Frühchristliche und byzantinische Bauten im südöstlichen Lykien*. *Istanbuler Forschungen* 46 (Tübingen).
- Sodini, J-P. 2007. “The Transformation of Cities in Late Antiquity within the Provinces of Macedonia and Epirus.” In *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond. Proceedings of the British Academy* 141, edited by A. G. Poulter, 311–36 (Oxford and New York).
- Striker. C. L., and Y. D. Kuban, eds. 1997. *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings* (Mainz).
- Striker. C. L., and Y. D. Kuban, eds. 2007. *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Excavations* (Mainz).
- Taddei. A. 2017. *Hagia Sophia before Hagia Sophia. A Study of the Great Church of Constantinople from its Origins to the Nika Revolt of 532* (Rome).
- Teteriatnikov, N. B. 2017. *Justinianic Mosaics of Hagia Sophia and their Aftermath* (Washington, DC).
- Themelis, P. G. 2004. *Πρωτοβυζαντινή Ελεύθερα*, I, volumes 1 and 2 (Athens).
- TIB *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*. <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/index.php?seite=home>
- Trépanier, N. 2014. *Foodways and Daily Life in Medieval Anatolia* (Austin, TX).
- Türker, A. Ç. 2009. *Byzantine Unglazed Pottery of Saint Nicholas Church at Demre-Myra*. Adalia Supplementary Series 8 (Istanbul).

- Şimşek, C., and T. Kaçar, eds. 2018. *The Lykos Valley and Neighbourhood in Late Antiquity. Laodikeia Çalışmaları*, Supplementary Series 1 (Istanbul).
- Vroom, J. 2003. *After Antiquity. Ceramics and Society in the Aegean from the 7th to the 20th Century A.C.: A Case Study from Boeotia, Central Greece*. *Archaeological Studies Leiden University* 10 (Leiden).
- Vroom, J. 2017. "Ceramics." In *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia before the Coming of the Turks*, edited by P. Niewöhner, 176–93 (Oxford and New York).
- Vroom, J. 2018. "The Ceramics, Agricultural Resources and Food." In *Archaeology and Urban Settlement in Late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Euchaita-Avkat-Beyözü and Its Environment*, edited by J. Haldon, H. Elton, and J. Newhard, 134–84 (Cambridge).
- Westphalen, S. 1998. *Die Odalar Camii in Istanbul: Architektur und Malerei einer mittelbyzantinischen Kirche*. *IstMitt* 42 (Tübingen).
- Westphalen, S. 2016. *Die Basilica am Kalekapı in Herakleia Perinthos: Bericht über die Ausgrabungen von 1992–2010 in Marmara Ereğlisi*. *Istanbul Forschungen* 55 (Tübingen).
- Whittow, M. 1995. "Rural Fortifications in Western Europe and Byzantium, 10th to 12th Century." In *Bosphoros. Essays in Honour of Cyril Mango*, edited by S. Efthymiadis, C. Rapp, and D. Tsougarakis. *ByzForsch* 21: 57–74.
- Winfield, D. 2000. "The British Contribution to Fieldwork in Byzantine Studies in the Twentieth Century: An Introductory Survey." In *Through the Looking Glass: Byzantium through British Eyes*, edited by R. Cormack and E. Jeffreys, 57–65 (Aldershot).
- Wischmeyer, W. 2017. "Archaeology: Early Christian (Historiography)." In *The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology* 1, edited by P. Corby Finney, 98–102 (Grand Rapids, MI).
- Zanini, E. 1994. *Introduzione all'archeologia bizantina* (Rome).
- Zanini, E., E. Giorgi, E. Triolo, and S. Costa. 2015. "The Excavation of the 'Early Byzantine District' near the Python in Gortyn (Field Seasons 2011–2013): An Image of the End of the Mediterranean City." In *3η Συνάντηση για το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στην Κρήτη*, 565–74 (Rethymno).





---

# *Architecture*

---



## CHAPTER 20

---

# RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

---

MARINA MIHALJEVIĆ

## EARLY BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE

---

### Constantine and His Successors

The Edict of Milan issued by Emperor Constantine I in 313 brought about radical changes in the development of Christianity. The favor of the emperor and the imperial family provided social affirmation to the Christian community. Christianity's newly acquired legal status solidified religious ritual and church hierarchy, which allowed Christian architecture to develop. New, monumental places of Christian worship, previously kept to the realm of domestic architecture, became prominent features of public spaces. Other places of Christian cultic veneration, such as *memoriae* and martyrs' tombs, were equally transformed.

To distance Christian spaces from pagan places of worship, Constantine's architects drew their inspiration from secular architecture. One of the immediate solutions was found in the public meeting halls, the so-called basilicas. The imperial connotations tied to these buildings were considered suitable to express both imperial protection and the emperor's understanding of his role as a divinely sanctioned authority (Krautheimer 1986, 39–42). Constantine's construction of the Lateran basilica in Rome (begun 313) demonstrates this early development in Christian architecture. The basilica was built as a cathedral church in proximity to a luxurious palace, Constantine's gift to the bishop of Rome. The complex functional needs of the Christian ritual and its community were accommodated by the axial scheme of a basilica (95 × 55 m), including a spacious nave separated from double side aisles by colonnades and terminating in a sanctuary and apse that housed the altar and seating for clergy. The nave and inner aisles were reserved for the congregation, the ends of the transept arms were places for the offertories, and the outer aisles were screened off possibly for the catechumens after dismissal (Krautheimer 1986, 47–48). A low chancel extended by an enclosed pathway

separated the altar from the nave. The apse itself was framed by a silver *fastigium* that served as a kind of proscenium for the performance of liturgy. The nave was lit by high clerestory windows; the interior glittered with its decorations of marble and other precious materials.

The Basilica of St. Peter, erected over the apostle's burial place ca. 319–322, reveals a comprehensive solution made by Constantine's architects to meet the unique needs of the site. Set within a Roman necropolis, the inconspicuous *aedicula* of St. Peter, which had been a Christian gathering place as early as the third century, became the focus of a new construction encompassing an enormous space created by an artificial platform laid over the Roman necropolis. Like the Lateran, the architectural plan of St. Peter's was organized along a longitudinal axis and included a triumphal outer gate, a vast colonnaded atrium, and a basilica measuring approximately 120 meters in length, terminating in a spacious transept with an apse centered around St. Peter's shrine.

St. Peter's basilican complex was quite distinctive as it accommodated under one roof the veneration of the martyr's shrine, church services, burials, and funeral banquets. The longitudinal space formed by nave and aisles (90 × 64 m) served as a new Christian cemetery and covered funeral hall. The transept was reserved for the ever-growing crowds of pilgrims gathered at the apostle's tomb. The shrine itself was partitioned by a bronze railing and surmounted by a canopy. During commemorative services, the transept served as a chancel and a portable altar was set in front of the shrine. The planning solution found in St. Peter's Basilica was adopted as the standard model for merging funerary halls and martyria, though it varied in churches with different functions throughout the empire.

More experimental architecture was used for Constantine's churches in the Holy Land, which present a range of approaches to resolving the demands of major commemorative sites, perhaps no better example of which is the complex associated with Christ's death and resurrection known as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (ca. 335). The church marking the site was a relatively short, five-aisled basilica with galleries preceded by an atrium and colonnaded *propylaeum*. However, the larger complex, reaching approximately 140 meters in length, stretched beyond the apse of the church. There, another porticoed courtyard enclosed the site of Golgotha and connected the basilica to the enormous Anastasis Rotunda, where the rock-cut tomb known as Christ's Sepulcher, the place of Christ's burial and resurrection, was located. The tomb itself was originally enshrined in a domed *aedicula* carried by marble columns (Biddle 1999, 65–71). The basilica was reserved for liturgical services, but sermons were also delivered elsewhere in the complex and processions moved from the basilica to Golgotha and the Sepulcher and back again. Although the exact appearance of the complex is not known for sure (Corbo 1981–1982, 51–137), having been altered over the centuries, most notably by the Frankish crusaders in the twelfth century, the architectural model of the Anastasis Rotunda and the *aedicula* were frequently replicated with interesting variations throughout the Middle Ages, indicating that the meaning was assigned to architectural forms (Krautheimer 1942). Recent scholarly attention has considered the symbolic

nature of Holy Land shrines and how the architecture itself became iconic and venerable (Ousterhout 2003; Blair Moore 2017).

The use of a monumental, centrally planned *martyrium* type for the Anastasis Rotunda perhaps indicates how Constantine and his architects also attached imperial connotations to this major Christian shrine by recalling the architectural iconography of centrally planned imperial mausolea and reception halls. Many churches continuing this legacy were built as the so-called double-shell buildings. Examples include the Golden Octagon, Antioch (begun 327), and S. Lorenzo in Milan (before 378).

Other Constantinian churches in the Holy Land showed different approaches to the problem of how to accommodate congregants, rituals, and holy sites. His architects created a similar but more simplified scheme to that of the Holy Sepulcher for the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem (333), where an octagonal martyrium—perhaps domed or with a peaked or conical roof—was added to the basilica's eastern end in place of an apse. A wide opening piercing the floor of the martyrium through the ceiling of the cave below allowed a view of the Grotto of the Nativity. The plan became influential in many respects—a martyrium constructed around a specific holy site to accommodate pilgrims at the terminal end of a basilica built primarily as a liturgical and ritual space became one of the principal schemes used in ecclesiastical architecture throughout the Byzantine Empire.

Constantine's numerous buildings in Constantinople have left almost no physical remains. Written records mention several ecclesiastical buildings, yet their architectural forms remain uncertain. The scope of Christian architecture in the new capital's urban matrix under Constantine remains unknown (Ćurčić 2010, 58–59). The role of architecture within the process of urban Christianization in the fourth century presents issues that require further scholarly investigation.

Architecture of the fifth century largely followed precedents set under Constantine and his successors, although there also appear numerous variations due to the broadened functions accommodated within the church building. Religious buildings became major spatial landmarks, substituting the role that once belonged to civic and palatial buildings. Evidence for the range of functions that could be performed in basilican buildings is found in many urban structures, from monastic churches, and cathedrals with martyria, to parish churches. These include the ruins of the Studios Monastery (453–454) in Constantinople and churches such as Hagios Demetrios (Figure 20.1) (late fifth century), Hagia Sophia, and the *Acheiropoietos* (450–470), all in Thessaloniki.

However, basilican churches were not restricted to the urban milieu and could be found at pilgrimage sites and in monastic complexes. For example, a large basilica with a transept was erected at the burial place of Abu Mina in Mar'yut, Egypt (490). As part of a major pilgrimage site, the church was expanded over the next century with the addition of a tetraconch over the tomb and an octagonal baptistery. The White Monastery (Deir-el-Abaid, near Sohag, Egypt, ca. 440) included in its complex an especially fine basilican church with a delicately planned, three-lobe apse. Variations in plan and decoration



FIGURE 20.1. The Church of Hagios Demetrios, Thessaloniki, late fifth century, interior of the nave from west. Photo: Yvon Fruneau/Wikimedia Commons.

reveal regional characteristics and demonstrate how experimental architecture resulted from efforts to respond to specific functions and ecclesiastical customs, although many of the unique features in evidence at different sites have not received full explanations regarding these functions and customs (Peschlow 2007).

Among the architectural forms in use, the cruciform annex to the *Apostoleiōn*, probably introduced by Emperor Constantius II (r. 337–361) as a solution for its original controversial arrangement that placed Constantine's tomb at the center of a holy martyrium, became common for other Apostolic churches (e.g., The Holy Apostles, Milan, ca. 382), martyria, and pilgrimage churches. The most splendid of these sites to survive, albeit in ruins, is certainly the martyrium (80 × 90 m) built at Qal 'at Sim'an (ca. 480–490). Four three-aisled basilicas—three of them with narthexes, the eastern one terminating in three apses—extend like radial arms from a central octagon built around the pillar on which St. Simeon Stylites spent his last years. Here, the characteristics of

regional architectural style, with stone masonry and expressive detailing, find their fullest achievement.

## The Era of Justinian

The vast building program pursued by Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–567) has traditionally been given credit for the major shift in Byzantine religious architecture, replacing basilicas with vaulted centralized structures. However, the remains of the glamorous basilica of Hagios Polyeuktos (527) finished concurrently with Justinian's ascension to the throne had already announced a new trend in the capital's ecclesiastical architecture (see Stanković chapter and detail in Dodd chapter, this volume, Figure 14.1). Planned as a short, almost square basilica (52 × 58 m) preceded by a long atrium, its nave may have been covered by a dome some 17 meters in diameter. If this were the case, the Church of Polyeuktos would have been the first example of a large-scale basilica featuring a central dome (Ćurčić 2010, 189–90) marking the introduction of a novel type in ecclesiastical architecture, the domed basilica (Krautheimer 1986, 245–257).

Justinian chose two learned men, Anthemios of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, to supervise the erection of the capital's major church, Hagia Sophia (532–537). We know that the expertise of these two *mechanopoi* included theoretical knowledge in arithmetic, geometry, statics, kinetics, astronomy, and optics, meeting the Vitruvian standards of the educational profile of an architect; but they also had practical knowledge of construction and the utilization of machines, the drawing of plans, and knowledge of vaulting and construction techniques (Schibille 2009). Their interpretation of the basilican plan relies upon four massive piers forming a central, square space, which, together with the four surmounting arches and four intermediate corner pendentives, support a dome some 32 meters in diameter. This central domed unit extends east and west into two additional spaces vaulted with semi-domes; additional piers at the east and west support these large spaces. Four semicircular *exedrae* located at each corner of the nave flank the short rectangular bays between the piers at the west and east ends. Four arched columns between the main piers with an additional two columns set in each of the *exedrae* separate the lateral aisles and corner bays. The scheme is repeated in the gallery, though with shorter intercolumniations. Above the gallery on the north and south sides, fenestrated walls fill in the large arches created by the piers.

The immense importance of Hagia Sophia's important and innovative architecture is also remarkable for its novel and distinctly Byzantine aesthetic regarding sacred space (Schibille 2014). The extensive use of marble revetment panels disguises the massive structural supports of the piers (Tronzo 2018). The perforation of the dome at its very base with a ring of windows creates the effect that it is floating or suspended high above. A great number of windows throughout seemingly dissolves the mass of walls and floods the nave with light that further reflects off the polished surfaces (see Pentcheva chapter, this volume). Other structural elements create new visual forms; for example, the columns of the upper galleries do not match the position of the lower ones, visually



challenging structural logic. Column capitals were intentionally drilled to achieve a lacy quality, matching similarly treated arches and spandrels. The shimmering of the vaulting mosaics must have furthered an impression of the heavenly realm on earth.

The furnishings of the church are only partially known from written sources; even less certain is our knowledge about the locations and settings of devotional objects and relics that were exhibited within the church. The architectural accentuation provided by corner exedrae raise questions about the possible intended function of these spaces (Ćurčić 2010, 198–200). These secondary, but highly visible spaces are easily accessible from the aisles of the church, which makes them desirable locations for the display of devotional objects or saints' shrines. Similar spaces are more emphatically present in the much smaller Church of Hagioi Sergios and Bakkos (completed before 536), considered to be a trial version for Hagia Sophia. In Ćurčić's opinion, the ambulatory enveloping its inner core was developed to secure easy access to the shrines of saints situated in exedrae without disrupting the services held in the apse or obstructing the central part of the building below the dome. This suggestion invites wider re-examination of the ritual functions of subsidiary spaces in Hagia Sophia and in Byzantine architecture in general. Recent studies have also brought insight into the consonance of architectural space, materialization, and sensory aspects in Hagia Sophia's interior (Pentcheva 2017). In view of these new methodological approaches, the complexities of Hagia Sophia's sacred space are still subjects for further examination (Lidov 2007).

While traditional, timber-roofed basilicas were still erected in the sixth century, the adoption of vaulting with thin brick elements and the inclusion of domed units became common outside the capital as well. The Church of Qasr Ibn Wardan (ca. 564), for example, is a short, three-aisled basilica with a continuous gallery enveloping its nave on three sides. A dome supported by two short barrel vaults to the east and west and two arches integrated into the walls above the lateral triple openings of the gallery surmounted the central portion of the nave. The well-preserved Church of Hagia Sophia in Serdica built presumably in the sixth century is a large, elongated basilica with a transept. The presence of massive piers separating its aisles from the nave indicates that vaulting was planned from the inception of the church. The placement of the dome over the crossing just in front of the sanctuary became a customary arrangement for domed basilicas.

## Seventh to Ninth Centuries

The seventh to ninth centuries are considered a period of transition for Byzantine architecture, characterized by innovation while preserving older architectural solutions as well. Experimentation with domed units brought considerable improvements in their execution, eventually leading to the development of the cross-domed church. The recent discovery of a mid-size (17 × 29.5 m), cross-domed basilica situated in Kramolin (Lovech, Bulgaria) and associated with Justinian's fortification has changed our understanding of the origins of the cross-domed church, which was apparently fully

developed well before 700 (Ćurčić 2010, 234). Cross-domed churches built between the seventh and ninth centuries are found in various regions; Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki (ca. 700) and the Church of the Koimesis at Nicaea (seventh century) are paradigmatic examples of the plan, yet the most illustrative example of this transformation was found in the reconstruction of the Church of Hagia Eirene in Constantinople (Figure 20.2) (probably after 753). At that time, its major structural disadvantage—the inadequate east-west arches of the previous dome—was rectified with the addition of two deep transversal barrel-vaulted bays extending above the entire width of the galleries. The



**FIGURE 20.2.** The church of Hagia Eirene, after 753, Istanbul, interior view of the dome from west. Photo: Gryffindor/Wikimedia Commons.

cross-domed unit created by a cruciform system of barrel-vaulted dome supports became a major structural invention utilized for centuries in Byzantine church architecture (Ćurčić 1992).

The beginning of the ninth century was marked by the formation of another Byzantine architectural type, the so-called cross-in-square. The church now known as Fatih Camii in Trilye, near Mudanya on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara (early ninth century) is considered one of the earliest representatives of the type. The church has a square naos divided into nine bays by four columns supporting a dome on a tall drum. The cross arms are covered by barrel vaults, while ovoid domical vaults cover the corner bays. The naos terminates in a bema and two *pastophoria* preceded by an additional rectangular bay in front of the apse. The church has a barrel-vaulted narthex to the west approached by a colonnaded portico. Examples with smaller dimensions likely indicate that a reduction of scale may have been decisive in the development of the type and the reason for the use of columns to support the dome instead of corner piers (Ousterhout 2001).

Despite the developments in liturgy that occurred during the transitional period, driving changes in ecclesiastical architecture, the erection of basilicas also continued. A rather large basilica with galleries, the so-called Bema Church found on the site of Kalenderhane Camii in Constantinople, was built in the seventh or eighth century. Apparently of nonimperial patronage, the church demonstrates the conservative tendencies recurrent in Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture. Indeed, the typological approach focused on an evolutionary narrative of Byzantine architecture that dominated Byzantine architectural studies habitually disregarded parallel cases and discounted regional contributions and variations, which, consequently, have still not been adequately evaluated (Striker 2001). While changes in liturgy may have fostered the production of smaller, centralized buildings like the cross-domed churches, changing patterns in patronage may have equally precipitated the preference for smaller buildings, a factor that yet needs further elucidation.

## MIDDLE BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE

---

### Ninth to Tenth Centuries

The paradigmatic building that marked the renewed vitality of the empire after the age of Iconoclasm is the now-vanished Nea Ekklēsia, built by Emperor Basil I in ca. 880 as part of his palatine complex. As we know, the church was raised on a platform, presumably in order to gain prominence among other palace buildings. The complex featured a front porticoed courtyard with two fountains, and a garden spreading behind the apse of the church. The church was cruciform, probably cross-domed (Ćurčić 2010, 273–274) with five domed spaces reflecting its five dedications, the central dome being

the highest. Its ostentatious interior furnishings adorned with silver, gold, and precious gems, marble-revetted walls, and mosaic-covered vaults established a new standard in the architectural display of imperial authority.

The two remaining tenth-century Constantinopolitan churches—The “North Church” of the Monastery of Lips (907), built by Constantine Lips, a nobleman and an officer under Emperor Leo VI, and the Myrelaion, built by Roman I Lakapenos before his ascension to the throne in 920—display a more daring use of the cruciform scheme. The Lips church is a particularly elaborate cross-in-square with two chapels projecting beside the apses on the ground level and four additional chapels above that are approached by stairs located in the towers flanking the narthex. This plan presumably related to the demands of private worship and increasing number of commemoration services (Mathews 1982). The upper chapels were probably covered with domes, indicating an early reception of the Nea Ekklēsia design.

The Church of the Theotokos (ca. 946–955), initially the main church of the Monastery of Hosios Loukas near Phokis, Greece, provides an example of a cross-in-square presenting another aesthetic approach (Figure 20.3). The church’s exterior was executed in so-called *cloisonné* technique featuring stone ashlar carefully framed by single vertical bricks and double and triple horizontal brick courses. Adding to the coloristic effect of the walls are horizontal strips of recessed dog-tooth frieze below the



FIGURE 20.3. The Monastery of Hosios Loukas, The *katholikon* (left), early eleventh century, and The Church of Theotokos (right), 946–955, exterior from east. Photo: Allan T. Kohl/Wikimedia Commons.

springing of the lower window arches, as well as the friezes of pseudo-Kufic below the eaves. The dome is fenestrated with *biforia* below once-undulating eaves; its facets are divided by slender colonnettes, and covered by carved marble revetment once inlaid with dark paste (L. Bouras 1980, 22–56).

In the aftermath of Iconoclasm, monastic settlements played an increasingly important role in the stabilization of imperial power. Imperial measures aimed at acquiring wider support from monastic circles gave rise to the so-called *coenobitic* form of monasticism. An earlier *eremitic* monastic enclave on the slopes of Mt. Athos experienced its crucial transformation during the tenth century (Bryer and Cunningham 2016, 38–46). Its first coenobitic monastery, the Great Lavra (963), was established by St. Athanasios, who procured support from Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas. The Great Lavra acquired the privileged status of an “imperial monastery,” which came with considerable financial advantages. From a small enclosure with the saint’s cell, the monastery evolved into a walled complex with a large church and subsidiary buildings (Ćurčić 2010, 301–302). The Lavra refectory was placed across from the church; its prominent position and size emphatically revealed its importance for the new coenobitic practice of communal dining. The elongated space of this cruciform building terminates in an apse to the west. The abbot’s table was near this apse while eight pairs of sigma tables and masonry benches lined its lateral walls in a manner resembling the palatine *triclinia*. Its interior was most probably adorned with frescoes. The subsequent establishment of other coenobitic monasteries on Mt. Athos mostly followed the architectural conception of the Great Lavra’s complex and the layout of its church.

The ambiguous plan of the impressive Church of the Panagia at Skripou (873–874) resembling a three-aisled basilica (16.5 × 28 m) with a central transept and a crossing surmounted by a wide dome (Papalexandrou 1998) is relevant for regional developments. Its three aisles terminating in three semicircular apses are separated by longitudinal walls pierced by door openings. As testified to by an inscription, the two lateral apses were dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul, indicating that the building functioned as a compound of three separate churches, comparable with aforementioned metropolitan developments. Fine sculptural decoration and the characteristic pyramidal composition, with the dominating volumes of the cross arms below the dome, further connect the church with metropolitan examples. The plan of the church correlates with the so-called inscribed-dome churches, one of many variations of cruciform churches which were widely spread throughout Byzantine territories in the central and southern Balkans (Ćurčić 2010, 328; Milanović and Johnson chapters, this volume). Due to the previous focus on an evolution in Byzantine architecture, the inscribed-dome churches have been seen as unsophisticated examples of what was happening in building centers. Yet their scheme seems to be better understood in the context of lesser-ranking patronage and as possible responses to the limited availability of columns (Ćurčić 2010, 328–37), which calls for a more nuanced scholarly approach to the regional building practices.

## Eleventh to Twelfth Century

Because of the extreme lavishness of its interior marble and mosaic decoration, the *katholikon* of the Monastery of Hosios Loukas (1011 or 1022) presents an exemplary illustration of the Middle Byzantine approach to church design. Its naos is a Greek-cross octagon covered by a dome 8.5 meters wide standing on eight massive piers. The upper octagon is formed by four squinches spanning the corners of the square naos and the four arches spanning the cruciform extensions of the naos and the sanctuary. The open design of the gallery level and the two tiers of tall, double- and triple-light windows that run around the church perimeter offer abundant illumination and a sense of structural lightness. The exterior was originally plastered and embellished by painted decoration including pseudo-Kufic characters. The pronounced overall sophistication suggests imperial patronage, for which, however, there is no textual evidence. One recent theory relates the erection of the church to Basil's II celebratory visit to Athens following his triumph over the Bulgarians in 1018 (Ćurčić 2010, 386).

The famous Church of Nea Moni, Chios, built 1042–1055 by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, offers yet another highly innovative Middle Byzantine plan, the so-called domed octagon. The church features a square naos surmounted by a huge dome carried by eight niches forming an upper octagonal dome base. Originally, the two zones were visually connected by double nonstructural colonnettes abutting the walls. The origin of this architecture has been much debated; however, both the architectural remains of the Virgin Peribleptos and St. George in Mangana, Constantinople, and the standing building of the Virgin Kamariotissa, Chalkē, indicate the possible presence of domed-octagons in eleventh-century Constantinopolitan architecture.

The Church of Daphni (ca. 1080) follows the general Greek-cross octagon scheme of the *katholikon* of Hosios Lukas, though with a much sturdier impression, culminating in a dome decorated with a famous representation of Christ *Pantokratōr*. In contrast to Hosios Loukas, the façades are flat with simple volumes arranged in a clear, pyramidal order. The exterior masonry technique is superbly executed *cloisonné*. The windows are encased by brick masonry and dog-tooth molding. Below them, a horizontal string course delineates the church pedestal constructed of large ashlar blocks set horizontally and vertically. The building seems to be representative of a regional architectural style, visible in a series of monuments identified as belonging to the so-called Greek or Helladic School (Vocotopoulos 2000, 154–67).

In contrast to the innovative character of some of these eleventh-century buildings, a conservative “revival of the long-obsolete types” has been acknowledged as characteristic of twelfth-century architecture. An exemplary case of revivalist tendencies has been recognized in the second Komnenian church at the Monastery of Chora, Constantinople (1118–1122), using the so-called atrophied Greek-cross scheme (a variation of the cross-domed plan with sturdy corner supports). However, insight into the totality of the eleventh-century architectural activity, including repairs to older churches (for example, the Church of Koimesis, Nicaea, originally seventh century) and

new construction in wide geographical regions of metropolitan influence (such as the church of Üçayak, Kırşehir, Central Anatolia, second half of the eleventh century), both with cross-domed plans, change the image of a distinctly twelfth-century conservative revival of obsolete plans (Mihaljević 2014, 735–38).

The same can be asserted regarding the question of eleventh- and twelfth-century architectural style. Due to the demise of major eleventh-century metropolitan monuments, the last phase of Middle Byzantine architecture has often been interpreted in terms of an abrupt introduction of a novel, “Komnenian” architectural style, contemporaneous with the elevation of the Komnenian dynasty to the throne of the Byzantine Empire.

The questionable identification of the building known as the Eski Imaret Camii with the Byzantine Church of Christ Pantepoptes built in 1087 by Anna Dalassena, the mother of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118), has been instrumental in such an evaluation (Figure 20.4) (Mango 1988). The exterior of the church displays a characteristic articulation with double- and triple-recessed arcades, apse design with upper blind niches, and the existence of decorative brickwork, which have been described as an invention of Komnenian era.

However, the exterior of Nea Moni already shows clear similarities to the preserved Komnenian churches of Constantinople, sharing with them common stylistic elements such as recessed-brick masonry, articulation with recessed arcades, hierarchical emphasis on the upper portions of the exterior walls and dome, as well as elaborated apse decoration with recessed blind niches, dog-tooth cornices, triangular pendants, and decorative brickwork. The other eleventh-century monuments related to Constantinopolitan influence, such as the church of Kamariotissa, Chalkē, also display these architectural features, which remained characteristic of twelfth-century metropolitan architecture. In addition to these, a close relationship between interior structural and functional parts and exterior articulation was an underlying and distinctly metropolitan feature of Middle Byzantine architecture. Apparently, Komnenian architecture does not appear in a vacuum, but rather evolved within contemporary architectural practices in the Byzantine capital (Mihaljević 2010, 15–79).

In terms of its architectural conception, the major Komnenian monument, the complex of three adjoined churches of the Monastery of Pantokrator, presents one of the most influential models in Byzantine architecture. As we learn from the monastery’s *typikon*, the earliest of the three, the “South Church” dedicated to Christ Pantokrator, was built by Emperor John II and his wife Irene in 1118–1124 and served the monastery. Before 1136, John II erected the “North Church” dedicated to the Virgin *Eleousa*. This church was open to the public and played a major role in the city’s religious life, as the venerable icon of the Virgin Hodēgētria was occasionally processed from the palace and displayed within.

Both of the churches present extraordinary examples of the cross-in-square plan. The larger of the two, the “North Church” (19 × 30 meters), was covered by a dome measuring seven meters in diameter. The magnificence of its interior, featuring fine furnishings, marble wall revetment, superb *opus sectile* flooring, sculptural decoration,



FIGURE 20.4. Eski Imaret Camii, eleventh century, exterior from south. Photo: A. Fabbretti/Wikimedia Commons.

and stained-glass windows, made it a major monument of the Komnenian era. The exteriors of both churches display an extremely sophisticated design. A range of stylistic elements characteristic of twelfth-century architectural style—recessed brick masonry, discrete application of brickwork, and especially elegant articulation with attenuated



double-recessed niches along with large triple-light windows in the apses—demonstrate the excellence of imperial building workshops.

Also completed before 1136 was the third church dedicated to Archangel Michael, the so-called *Heroön*, inserted between the two existing structures and intended as the Komnenian emperors' mausoleum. The church comprised two distinct parts, each covered by a dome, the western being reserved for the imperial tombs, and the eastern accommodating the sanctuary. As we know from written sources, the carefully prepared tomb of Manuel I (r. 1143–1180) was set in a prominent spot in an archway visible and approachable from both the churches of the Archangel and Pantokrator. The marble sarcophagus was juxtaposed with a major relic, the Stone of Unction, which had been obtained by Manuel I. Luxurious opus sectile floor and wall mosaics highlighted the tomb and its setting. The arrangement of the tombs in a separate church set within a large compound of churches provided an ultimate model for later dynastic mausolea in Constantinople and the Byzantine domain.

The dissemination of a consistent eleventh- and twelfth-century architectural style, which can be recognized in the wider realm of Byzantine influence including Old Rus', Asia Minor, the Greek islands, the central Balkans, Venice, and Sicily, opens the question of the modes of transmission of architectural patterns and the general competence of Byzantine builders as the participants in such a process. In general, there is only scant knowledge of Byzantine building workshops and their modes of operation (Bouras 2002; Matschke 2001). The lack of architectural drawings for Byzantine architecture promoted the idea of a Byzantine “master builder” (as opposed to an architect)—an architectural practitioner with substantial skills, but with no theoretical knowledge and lacking the ability to preconceptualize buildings in architectural drawings (Ousterhout 1999). This issue has become a question for ongoing academic studies, which are gradually broadening the understanding of the modes of operation of Byzantine builders and shaping more flexible views on the creative component of Byzantine architecture (Hadjitryphonos 2010; Mihaljević 2012; Bogdanović 2017, 251–63; Mamaloukos 2018).

Another aspect of Middle Byzantine architecture deserves further academic engagement. As already mentioned, early studies of Byzantine architecture introduced a simplified division of Byzantine buildings in the two opposed “schools” of architecture—Constantinopolitan and Greek—resulting in only minor efforts to analyze examples of mutual exchange. The compartmentalization of Byzantine architecture has been furthered in scholarly assertions of regional, that is, national “schools” of architecture. Such academic constructs and its repercussions, as well as the term *school* have been criticized, yet still linger in studies of Middle and Late Byzantine architecture (Ćurčić 2013).

## LATE BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE

### 1200–1450

---

The calamity of 1204 and the Latin rule of Constantinople halted new construction in the Byzantine capital for more than half a century. The Byzantine court's relocation

to Nicaea must have been followed by dynamic architectural activity. However, the Laskarid rulers' building program can today only be ascertained from the buildings preserved in outlying regions of Laskarid control. In general, these monuments display a range of planning solutions and a similar, if not a consistent, architectural style. This is especially recognizable in buildings of high quality, such as the Church of Prophet Naum (Alaşehir), "Church E" (Sardis), and Panagia Krina (Chios), which seem to be representative of the Laskarid construction (Buchwald 1979). They are built using *opus mixtum*, alternating one or two courses of ashlar blocks with several courses of brick, a technique also visible in the Laskarid palace foundation at Nymphaion (modern Kemalpaşa). Here, the walls are articulated by multiple recessed blind arcades and richly decorated with brickwork. A wider grouping of preserved churches from this period, however, often display ambiguities in stylistic features, which have prevented scholars from establishing a complete picture of Laskarid architecture.

The city of Arta, the capital of the independent Byzantine Despotate of Epiros, became an important center of architectural production from around 1230 until the end of the thirteenth century. The preserved buildings reveal a distinct architectural style based upon an earlier local tradition. The small Church of Hagios Vasileos presents an illustrative example with its conservative basilican arrangement, the exterior decorated with extraordinarily colorful embellishments including a band of glazed tiles with a diaper design, shaped brick, recessed dog-tooth friezes, and glazed ceramic relief icons.

The most impressive preserved monument in Arta, the Church of the Virgin Paregoretissa was built in two phases (Figure 20.5/Color Plate 11) (Theis 1991). The original, smaller Greek-cross octagon church was perhaps built by Despot Michael II around 1250 but was repaired and enlarged around 1290 by Despot Nikephoros I, who added an ostentatious exterior measuring 22.5 × 21.8 meters and complex interior decoration. The building's exterior features two tiers of aligned windows, adding to a sense of monumentality. The building is topped with six domes, the largest at the center and four smaller domes at the corners. A sixth dome in the form of an open lantern rises above the entrance bay of the church. The exterior surfaces still preserve the decorative treatment with recessed dog-tooth friezes characteristic of Epirote monuments. The interior's central core has the appearance of an enormous nonstructural baldachin: three tiers of superimposed, corbelled columns ascend to the squinches carrying the dome, its apex 21.5 meters above the floor. The use of a conservative plan, seen in eleventh-century monuments, seems to be in line with the interior design, which recalls the older and much subtler interior of Nea Moni.

With the decline of Arta around 1290, the city's building workshops moved to other centers. Their work in other Byzantine centers, and even in Serbia (Ćurčić 2015), has yet to be fully studied.

Even though the reestablishment of the Byzantine state in the later thirteenth century was followed by a rather high volume of construction, the preserved ecclesiastical monuments in Constantinople include only a single imperial foundation, the Church of Ioannes Prodromos, or the "South Church" of the Monastery of Lips. The church



FIGURE 20.5 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 11A). Paregoretissa, Arta, 1290, exterior from northeast. Photo: Marion Schneider and Christoph Aistleitner/Wikimedia Commons.

was built after 1282 by the empress Theodora, who intended it to house a mausoleum for the Palaiologan dynasty. Presumably modeled after the churches of the Pantokratōr Monastery, this new church was attached to the older, tenth-century Church of the Theotokos. The south intermediary wall was perforated to allow communication between the churches. The plan of the “South Church” reflects its intended purpose: its central, domed core was separated by a monumental *tribela* from the church ambulatory, which functioned as a funerary space. The tomb of the empress was placed in a central position in the archway between the two churches.

The complexity of exterior decoration displays novel architectural developments. The wall of the eastern end’s three apses is articulated by recessed blind arcades set in three horizontal zones. The entire surface of the walls, including the spandrels of the arches, is covered by intricate brick patterns. The use of *opus mixtum* with rows of ashlar blocks enhances the lavish effect. The preserved exterior of the substructure of the Church of Christ Philantropos in Constantinople (ca. 1308) is similarly treated, which likely indicates the same building workshop (Ćurčić 2010, 534–35). The sources for this novel approach to exterior decoration, however, remain questionable. It has been suggested that the building workshop must have come to the capital from the Laskarid domain, but, once again, the lack of a detailed picture of Laskarid architecture makes it

difficult to estimate the role it may have played in the development of Byzantine architecture at the end of the thirteenth century.

The private foundation of Theodore Metochites in the Monastery of Christ of Chora (ca. 1316–1320), Constantinople, reveals further departures from earlier examples (Figure 20.6). The cross-domed naos of the earlier eleventh-century Komnenian church was remodeled and further renovated with the addition of a northern annex, a double narthex on the west, and a funerary *parekklesion* on the south side of the church. The refinement of the church interior adorned by marble revetment, exquisite mosaics (see James chapter, this volume), and sculptural decoration (see Brooks chapter, this volume) is reiterated in the building's exterior, constructed by alternating several brick courses with courses of ashlar blocks. In its disposition of spaces, the church evinces an unusual disregard of symmetry culminating in the asymmetrical position of domes. The *parekklesion*'s façade is articulated by uneven blind arcades unrelated to the interior scheme, an indication of a major shift from the Classical principles of previous Byzantine architecture.

Architecture after the reestablishment of the Byzantine state roughly parallels developments in the other Byzantine centers of Thessaloniki, Mystras, and Ohrid. The number of ecclesiastical monuments of Thessaloniki built between 1250 and 1450 bear witness to the city as a major center of architectural production. Unlike the situation in Arta, and rather similar to that of Constantinople, this building activity came after a prolonged period of stagnation, which indicates the absence of major building workshops



FIGURE 20.6. The Monastery of Christ of Chora, Katholikon, Istanbul, ca. 1316–1320, exterior from northeast. Photo: Gryffindor/Wikimedia Commons.

within the city. After 1246, Thessaloniki came under the rule of the Nicaean state, which increased its economic importance and presumably attracted builders from elsewhere.

The Church of Hagios Panteleimon may be the earliest of Thessaloniki's churches from this period, built ca. 1300; however, the patron and date of its erection remain indefinite. The use of brick, blind arcades as means of exterior articulation, and a domed narthex recalls Constantinopolitan architecture of the period and suggests that the builders may have come from other regions of the Nicaean Empire. On the other hand, the exterior of the Church of Hagia Aikatherini bears certain similarities to Epirote architecture, which testifies to the various origins of the builders present in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Thessaloniki (Ćurčić 2010: 549–52). The exterior of the apses of a major Thessalonikan monument, the Church of the Holy Apostles (first third of the fourteenth century), presents a hybrid architectural style, blending the influences of Constantinople and Nicaea visible in its lower arcaded zone and the upper flat wall surfaces covered with decorative brick bands, emblematic of Epirote architecture (Ćurčić 2015).

These Thessalonikan churches display a local variation of the cross-in-square plan featuring a central dome carried by marble columns widely distanced from each other and pulled back toward the corners of the square naos. This core of the church along with an inner narthex, when present, is further enveloped on three sides by an outer narthex terminating in two lateral domed chapels at the east. Both in Hagia Aikatherini and Holy Apostles, two additional domes in the western part of the narthex create the characteristic five-dome exterior. The design reveals a general concern to maintain a formal coherence and symmetrical disposition, rather different from contemporaneous Constantinopolitan churches with their general lack of such formal architectural qualities.

At the end of thirteenth century, the Byzantine cities of Ohrid and Mystras also became important architectural centers. Whereas Ohrid's construction activity lasted less than a century, Mystras, a capital of the Despotate of the Morea, displayed its importance as a Byzantine center with close ties to western powers by supporting heavy building activity that lasted until around 1430. Epirote affinities displayed in the Church of Hagioi Theodoroi (ca. 1290) suggest the arrival of builders from Arta, which, at the time, was experiencing an economic and political decline (Ćurčić 2010, 586–87). Later construction, for example the Church of the Hodēgētria (Aphendiko) built ca. 1310, also points to the import of itinerant builders with certain knowledge of Constantinopolitan practice. The church's pseudo-basilican scheme, which changes to a cross-in-square at the gallery level, may be intended to recoup the complexity of Constantinopolitan churches (Hallensleben 1969).

The last of Mystras's major monuments, the katholikon of the Pantanassa Monastery built in 1428, displays Western influence in an idiosyncratic decorative vocabulary—a stone carved arcade on engaged colonettes with pointed and ogival arches crowned by decorative plumes, and a surmounting tier of garlands hanging from the *fleur-de-lis* on their upper sides.

As in the case of the aforementioned Late Byzantine architectural centers, the interpretation of Mystras's architecture appears dependent on a fuller insight into broader Byzantine developments. The general lack of knowledge about the architectural developments in Nicaea presents a crucial barrier to this aim. Moreover, the diversity and often idiosyncratic character of regional styles have contributed to the compartmentalization of architecture from this period in studies thus far. Thus, the interchange of architectural conceptions critical to the creation of regional styles in which building workshops played a crucial role has been generally neglected, presenting a major obstacle in our understanding of Late Byzantine architecture (Bogdanović 2011). The narrow focus on decorative aspects in exterior treatment has further blurred attempts to establish general architectural and design characteristics and prevented meaningful interpretation of its decorative content (Trkulja 2004).

## REFERENCES

- Biddle, M. 1999. *The Tomb of Christ* (Stroud).
- Blair Moore, K. 2017. *The Architecture of the Christian Holy Land: Reception from Late Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Cambridge).
- Bogdanović, J. 2011. "Regional Developments in Late Byzantine Architecture and the Question of 'Building Schools': An Overlooked Case of the Fourteenth-Century Churches from the Region of Skopje." *Byzantinoslavica* 69, 1–2: 219–66.
- Bogdanović, J. 2017. *Framing Sacred Space* (Oxford).
- Bouras, Ch. 2002. "Master Craftsmen, Craftsmen, and Building Activities in Byzantium." In *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, edited by A. Laiou, 539–54 (Washington, DC).
- Bouras, L. 1980. *Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του ναού της Παναγίας στο μοναστήρι του Οσίου Λουκά* (Athens).
- Bryer, A., and M. Cunningham, eds. 2016 [1996]. *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism: Papers from the Twenty-eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1994* (Abington and New York).
- Buchwald, H. 1979. "Lascarid Architecture." *JÖB* 28: 261–96.
- Corbo, V. C. 1981–1982. *Il santo sepolcro di Gerusalemme: Aspetti archeologici dalle origini al periodo crociato*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem).
- Ćurčić, S. 1992. "Design and Structural Innovation in Byzantine Architecture before Hagia Sophia." In *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, edited by R. Mark and A. Çakmak, 16–38 (Cambridge).
- Ćurčić, S. 2010. *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven and London).
- Ćurčić, S. 2013. "Architecture in Byzantium, Serbia and the Balkans through the Lenses of Modern Historiography." In *Serbia and Byzantium*, edited by M. Angar and C. Sode, 9–31 (Frankfurt am Main).
- Ćurčić, S. 2015. "Epirote Input in Architecture of Byzantine Macedonia and Serbia around 1300." In *Αφιέρωμα στον Ακαδημαϊκό Παναγιώτη Λ. Βοκοτοπουλο*, edited by V. Katsaros and A. Tourta, 127–40 (Athens).

- Hadjitryphonos, E. 2010. "Presentations and Representations of Architecture in Byzantium: The Thought behind the Image." In S. Ćurčić and E. Hadjitryphonos, *Architecture as Icon*, 113–54 (Princeton).
- Hallensleben H. 1969. "Untersuchungen zur Genesis und Typologie des 'Mystratypus'." *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 18: 105–18.
- Krautheimer, R. 1942. "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture.'" *JWCI* 5: 1–33.
- Krautheimer, R. 1986. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. 4th ed. with S. Ćurčić (New Haven and London).
- Lidov, A. 2007. "The Creator of Sacred Space as a Phenomenon of Byzantine Culture." In *L'Artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*, edited by M. Bacci, 135–76 (Pisa).
- Mamaloukos, S. 2018. "Από τον σχεδιασμό στην κατασκευή: Ζητήματα εφαρμογής στη βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική." *DChAE* 39, 4: 83–98.
- Mango C., 1988. "Where at Constantinople was the Monastery of Christos Pantepoptes?" *DChAE* 20: 87–88.
- Mathews T. 1982. "'Private' Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Toward a Re-appraisal." *CA* 30: 125–139.
- Matschke, K.-P. 2001. "Builders and Building in Late Byzantine Constantinople." In *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, edited by N. Necipoğlu, 315–28 (Leiden, Boston, and Köln).
- Mihaljević, M. 2010. "Constantinopolitan Architecture of the Komnenian Era (1080–1180) and Its Impact in the Balkans." PhD diss., Princeton University.
- Mihaljević, M. 2012. "Change in Byzantine Architecture." In *Approaches to Byzantine Architecture and Its Decoration*, edited by M. Johnson, R. Ousterhout, and A. Papalexandrou, 99–119 (Farnham).
- Mihaljević, M. 2014. "Üçayak, a Forgotten Byzantine church." *BZ* 107, 2: 725–54.
- Moore, K. B. 2017. *The Architecture of the Christian Holy Land: Reception from Late Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Cambridge).
- Ousterhout, R. 1999. *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Ousterhout, R. 2001. "The Architecture of Iconoclasm." In *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era (ca. 680–850): The Sources*, edited by L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, 3–36 (Farnham, Burlington, Singapore, and Sydney).
- Ousterhout, R. 2003. "Architecture as Relic and the Construction of Sanctity: The Stones of the Holy Sepulchre." *JSAH* 62, 1: 4–23.
- Papalexandrou, A. 1998. "The Church of the Virgin of Skripou: Architecture, Sculpture and Inscriptions in Ninth-Century Byzantium." PhD diss., Princeton University.
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2017. *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Peschlow, U. 2007. "Dividing Interior Space in Early Byzantine Churches." In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 53–72 (Washington, DC).
- Schibille, N. 2009. "The Profession of the Architect in Late Antique Byzantium." *Byzantion* 79: 360–79.
- Schibille, N. 2014. *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience* (London and New York).

- Striker, C. L. 2001. "The Findings at Kalenderhane and Problems of Method in the History of Byzantine Architecture." In *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography, and Everyday Life*, edited by N. Necipoğlu, 107–16 (Leiden, Boston, and Köln).
- Theis, L. 1991. *Die Architektur der Kirche der Panagia Parēgorētissa in Arta, Epirus* (Amsterdam).
- Trkulja, J. 2004. "Aesthetics and Symbolism of Late Byzantine Church Façades, 1204–1453." PhD diss., Princeton University.
- Tronzo, W. 2018. "Justinian's Hagia Sophia, Angels and Restlessness." In *Radical Marble: Architectural Innovation from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by J. N. Napoli and W. Tronzo, 23–42 (Abingdon and New York).
- Vocotopoulos, P. 2000. "Church Architecture in Greece during the Middle Byzantine Period." In *Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors 843–1261*, edited by O. Pevny, 154–67 (New York).





## CHAPTER 21

---

# DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

---

NEBOJŠA STANKOVIĆ

## INTRODUCTION

---

THE Orthodox Christian faith played a fundamental role in the Byzantine state, society, and culture. Its various manifestations—beliefs, devotions, and, most notably, worship patterns—directly determined the planning, organization, form, and other elements of religious architecture. The space in which the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical prayers and rites were conducted, providing the appropriate physical and symbolical setting for the offices, was as important as the texts designated to be read (Wybrew 1989, x, and 2–3). It developed through time along with changes in the liturgical ritual and devotions, most often influenced by them. However, a church building does not merely house and reflect religious events; it also has an impact on the way they are accommodated within an already defined spatial arrangement. The “form may amplify, sanctify, comment upon, and interact with the functions it houses, and both form and function can be empowered by the interaction” (Ousterhout 1998, 81; see also Marinis 2012, 339). In some cases, this meant that developments in form that were independent of the function (i.e., caused by structural or other practical concerns) led to changed perceptions of the space and could influence both the way a service is conducted and its meaning.

Older scholarship often neglected or ignored the role of various forms of ritual and devotion in the examination of Byzantine ecclesiastic architecture, putting more importance on morphology, building techniques, and styles, eventually developing various typologies (reasons for this situation can be found in Marinis 2010, 284). This has been largely changed by a few studies of the relationship between the liturgy, particularly the Eucharist, and architecture (most notably by Mathews 1971 and Marinis 2014). We still do not know much about other forms of devotion as they shaped the space or

were manifested in regard to it. That is mainly due to the scarcity of appropriate sources, especially outside Constantinople, and their frequent silence on the use of church space for ritual actions. In some cases, the surviving architecture and specific spatial solutions, if examined against the sources and living liturgical traditions, can shed more light.

This chapter presents the current state of research of Byzantine ecclesiastic architecture, exposing its relationship to exegetic interpretations, various segments of worship, and forms of devotion. An effort is made to address all periods and include developments in regions outside the capital. Also, some manifestations in religious architecture beyond the church building are briefly examined. At the end, there is an overview of issues and problems in the study of the subject, and of directions where the field is expected to go in the future.

## CHURCH SPACE IN BYZANTIUM: MAIN IDEAS AND ASPECTS

---

In the beginning, the communal building of a Christian congregation was considered a meeting place for congregational worship (synagogue, *ekklēsia*), rather than a sacred preserve where the divinity dwells and, as such, off-limits to the laity (temple, *naos*). The latter concept was reserved for the Temple of Jerusalem and was also present in polytheistic Greek and Roman religions. The use of a sacred, unavailable space was initially rejected by Early Christians in developing their space for worship. Later on, however, this concept gradually merged with the communal space for services, due to the sacrificial component in the Eucharist, which superseded (and incorporated) Old Testament Temple traditions (Wybrew 1989, 13–14, 33, 37). The process was finished by the early fourth century, when Christianity was legalized and given freedom of worship, and when the oldest exegetical texts drawing similarities between the Temple and the church building were written (Ousterhout 2010, 225–26). In the 520s, the church of St. Polyeuktos in Constantinople emulated the plan (proportions) and decoration of the Temple of Solomon, although the political reasons for such treatment likely outweighed the religious ones in this case.

The church building was also viewed as a microcosm, a concept not invented by the Byzantines, as it existed in older cultures and may have entered Christian theological thought in Antioch (McVey 1983). It seems that the domed form and enormous space of Justinian's Hagia Sophia (Figure 2.1) provided a physical embodiment of such notions as “image of the cosmos” and “heaven on earth” (Wybrew 1989, 4; Taft 1992, 35–38); these gradually became commonplace in theoretical considerations of the Byzantine church building, especially if domed, by both Byzantine writers (Maximos the Confessor, in his *Mystagogy*, being the earliest) and modern scholars. The economic and political difficulties of later centuries brought a reduction in scale, but the form was not abandoned but rather consolidated, as domed structures persisted and

constituted the mainstream in ecclesiastic architecture, seen in the interiors of Hagia Eirene, Constantinople and Hagia Sophia, Trebizond (Figures 20.2 and 21.1). The view of the church as a microcosm survives until the end of Byzantium: “the narthex being the earth, the nave heaven, and the most holy sanctuary that which is above the heavens” (Symeon of Thessalonika, 91).

Parallel to the cosmic symbolism, other meanings were ascribed to the church building and its parts, associated with the same twofold interpretation applied to the liturgy itself (Taft 1992, 45–46). These are found in various *ekphrases* and liturgical treatises produced during and after Iconoclasm, from Germanos I of Constantinople to Symeon of Thessaloniki. Authors usually associate the actual form and place of certain parts of the church with historic events from Christ’s salvific ministry and Passion, or



FIGURE 21.1. Hagia Sophia church (between 1238 and 1263), Trebizond, interior looking east. Domed nave of the cross-in-square type with sanctuary apse. Photo: Nebojša Stanković.

with some eschatological notions: the altar table is “the place of the Savior’s burial,” the apse represents both the cave of the Nativity and the cave of the entombment, the ciborium over the altar evokes the Crucifixion (*ArtByzEmp*, 141–43). Since the Eucharistic bread and wine are consecrated on the altar, it is also likened to the table of the Last Supper. Traditionally, the apse is oriented to the east, the direction of Christ’s Second Coming and, accordingly, the altar was also viewed as the throne of Christ (Ousterhout 1998, 84). All these instances show that both the meaning of certain segments of the Divine Liturgy and the architectural form of the spaces where they were performed accounted for the symbolism ascribed to the church building and its parts. And it was the shape and structure of the ritual and corresponding church space that caused such meaning, not the other way around. These multiple symbolic frameworks overlapped in the same space and each was called up as a specific service necessitated, evoking the key events and places of the Christian faith and mystically transporting the worshipper there (Ousterhout 1998, 98–99).

## LITURGICAL RITUAL AND CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

---

A Byzantine church building primarily housed the celebration of the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist), the core of the communal worship and the focus of spiritual life of a Byzantine (Schulz 1986; Wybrew 1989; Taft 1992). The church building consists of three main and distinct parts, from east to west: *bēma* (sanctuary with an altar), *naos* (nave, or church proper), and *narthex* (entrance vestibule). Their sizes and forms varied among regions and periods, but the functions of each part in the accommodation of the liturgical ritual remained essentially the same. The first two were reserved for the clergy and congregation, respectively, whereas the narthex’s functions changed more through time, likely due to its liminal, preparatory nature. Other liturgical services (Daily Offices), sacraments (baptism, confession, wedding, ordination), and religious rites (profession of monastic vows, coronation, funeral)—whether communal or private—were commonly performed either inside such defined church buildings or in auxiliary facilities.

The Divine Liturgy is structured as a series of processions, prayers, chanting of hymns, and ritual actions. The first part, known as the “Liturgy of the Word,” consists of introductory prayers and hymns (originally performed in the narthex, later in the nave); the procession of the clergy with the Gospel book (Little Entrance), with the Gospel solemnly deposited on the altar; readings from the Scriptures and singing of Psalms; bishop’s sermon; and dismissal of the catechumens. The readings from the Epistles (or Acts) and Gospels are done in the nave, among the congregation, evoking Christ’s preaching to the people. The second part, the “Liturgy of the Faithful,” commences with short petitions, followed by the Great Entrance, in which the Eucharistic bread and wine are transferred from the sacristy (originally in the church’s entrance zone, later next to

the sanctuary) to the altar; then comes the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and communion prayers, in preparation for the communion of the clergy (in the sanctuary) and laity (at the sanctuary barrier); prayers of thanksgiving and dismissal of the faithful close the service (Ousterhout 1998, 85–87; Marinis 2012, 285–96).

As certain crucial segments of the Divine Liturgy, the most important being the consecration of the Eucharistic elements, take place in the sanctuary, it has the most defined space and clearly articulated functional features. Furnishings include the altar table, with a relic enshrined inside or below it (Yasin 2015; Marinis and Ousterhout 2015, 154–57), the ciborium (domical or pyramidal canopy with four pillars, comprehensively examined by Bogdanović 2017) covering the altar and heightening its sacredness, and the *synthronon*. The last of these is a set of concentric stepped seats for the clergy inside the semicircular apse, with a bishop's throne in the highest point in the middle; the bishop would deliver his homily from there (Wybrew 1989, 39, 49). The sanctuary is the most important part of the church, and the altar is what makes the church a holy site, rather than a mere prayer hall (Marinis 2010, 292). The sanctuary is commonly flanked by two rooms, known as *parabēmata* or *pastophoria*. In small churches, niches may be substituted for architectural spaces, as at Kurbinovo (Figure 21.2).

The northern of the two, the *prothesis* or *proskomidē*, is the place where the Holy Gifts are prepared and liturgical vessels stored. Its main feature is a small table set in a niche in the east wall, where the *Prothesis* rite is conducted and the Eucharistic bread and wine are



FIGURE 21.2. Church of St. George (1191), Kurbinovo (Republic of North Macedonia), sanctuary from northwest. Altar table with bishop's throne behind it; prothesis and diakonikon niches to the left and right. Photo: Nebojša Stanković.

kept before they are transported to the altar. This table is sometimes accompanied by a sink for rinsing the vessels, built into the north wall. The southern room, the *diakonikon*, is commonly of the same size and form as the prothesis, but rarely has any distinct fixtures and has been used for storing liturgical vestments, books, relics, and other sacred items (Marinis 2010, 293). Sometimes, the term *pastophoria* may refer to additional rooms attached to the tripartite sanctuary, such as the *skeuophylakion* (sacristy) or, in Late Byzantium, the *typikarion* (depository of liturgical vessels and documents).

A divider, taking any form from a low chancel barrier (*templon*), as at Nerezi (Figure 21.3), to a tall screen set with icons (*iconostasis*), marks the boundary between the sanctuary area and the naos, while the narthex remains separated from the nave by a wall.

The nave commonly has no permanent furnishing, which probably accounted for greater flexibility in the architectural treatment of this part, particularly in later periods (Ousterhout 1998, 96). The only permanent fixture is the *ambo* (pulpit), where the Gospel was read by the deacon, bishops' homilies and proclamations occasionally said (Mathews 1971, 123 and 150–51; Ousterhout 1998, 87), and relics or sacred items shown to the crowds (e.g., the Exaltation of the Cross). The ambo was in the form of a small tower, approached by two flights of stairs from east and west and often surmounted by a canopy, the symbol of heavenly protection for the spot where the Divine Word



FIGURE 21.3. Church of St. Panteleimōn (1164), Nerezi (Republic of North Macedonia), templon (partially reconstructed) viewed from west. Photo: Nebojša Stanković.

is proclaimed. The *solea* was a fenced-off corridor used by the deacon to reach the ambo from the sanctuary. A standard feature in the earlier periods, the ambo generally disappears after the seventh century (Marinis 2011, 29), likely due to reduction in size of the church's interior.

The narthex was not always considered essential and, consequently, was omitted in some churches. However, in Constantinople during the Early Byzantine period, narthexes served for the preparation of liturgical entrances into the nave and accommodated catechumens and penitents (Mathews 1971, 138–47, and 125–30). In later centuries, the narthex assumed some other functions of the increasingly complex liturgical scheme, which was embraced by monasteries; hence, the lack of a narthex in some churches suggests their non-monastic character. On the other hand, in some cases, commonly those that were cathedrals or served monastic communities, there is an extra, outer narthex (*exonarthex*), added in front of the initial narthex.

Smaller spaces of liturgical, devotional, or funerary purpose were occasionally appended to the main church and, therefore, referred to as *parekklēsia* or subsidiary chapels (Marinis 2014, 77–87; Marinis 2010, 296–98; Ćurčić 1977; Babić 1969). They appear on the north and south flanks of the narthex, nave or sanctuary. These variances in position were often influenced by the function and meaning of the addition: the funerary ones tend to be located in the narthex area, while those housing some relics may be attached to the sanctuary, although there are also reversed cases. An important question regarding auxiliary chapels is whether and when they were used for Eucharistic celebrations. Chapels that lack liturgical features/furnishings most likely were not assigned this function. Other characteristic auxiliary buildings were baptisteries, readily recognizable by their centralized plan and the presence of a baptismal basin, commonly built into the floor with two sets of descending steps on opposite sides (Jensen 2005). With the transition from adult to infant baptism, separate facilities were not constructed after the sixth century (Ousterhout 2008, 356) and the ritual was likely staged in the narthex. Skeuophylakia, originally separate structures, were less architecturally distinct and continue to be included in churches throughout Byzantine history, appended to the sanctuary or on the church's upper floor for safety reasons.

A standard setting for the liturgical ritual included pictorial decoration of the wall and vault surfaces (see James, Bolman and Gerstel chapters, this volume), icons (displayed on stands), chandeliers, candleholders, curtains, and other decoration and furnishings (Brooks, Klein and Woodfin chapters, this volume). Some of these, particularly the lighting, played roles in the ritual, enhancing the devotional atmosphere. Icons (see Corrie chapter, this volume) were the focus of devotion both within and outside the liturgy. Usually encased in decorative frames (*proskynētaría*), they were available for veneration in the naos and narthex, often placed at strategic points, such as entrance areas or close to the sanctuary (Kalopissi-Verti 2006). Other pieces, although used for or during certain rituals, such as holy water font and *stasidia* (seats fixed along walls in the nave and narthex), were essentially utilitarian. A late example, the interior at Hilandar Monastery on Mt. Athos, exhibits many of these elements (Figure 21.4/Color Plate 12).





FIGURE 21.4 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 12). Hilandar Monastery, Mt. Athos (Greece), katholikon (completed in 1321), interior of the nave looking east. Furnishing, which is Post-Byzantine, gives the sense of how a complete Byzantine church setting might have looked like. Photo: Nebojša Stanković.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN WORSHIP AND DEVOTION, AND THEIR RESPONSES IN ARCHITECTURE

---

The main church type of the Early Byzantine period (fourth–ninth century) was the basilica. It was borrowed from secular Roman architecture and had some imperial overtones, appropriated for the house of prayer to the Heavenly King, Christ. The

longitudinal organization of the interior, with the focus on the sanctuary and its apse, was well suited to the processional character of the early liturgical ritual, as well as to accommodating large congregations (Mathews 1971, 138–73) (Figure 20.1). In many cases, the central nave was screened off from the side aisles with parapet slabs set in the intercolumniations or independently (Peschlow 2006; Brooks chapter, this volume). This implies that the central area may have been reserved for the ritual, while the congregation was pushed to the aisles. Other possible explanations are that the space division reflected the separation of either the sexes, with women relegated to the side aisles (Taft 1998, 87), or different ranks of the faithful, with the baptized or communicants worshipping in the central nave, while the catechumens or penitents prayed in the side aisles. However, none of these can be positively confirmed by textual sources and the actual use may have varied among different regions and particular cases (Mathews 1971, 117–25, 130–33; Peschlow 2006, 69–71).

The prothesis migrated from its early location in the entrance zone to the sanctuary area. The distinct Prothesis rite developed over a period of several centuries (Pott 2010, 197–228). This is also reflected in architecture. The tripartite sanctuary seems to have become the norm first in Early Byzantine Syria. In the central Byzantine regions, the earliest securely dated tripartite sanctuary is found in the cathedral of Justiniana Prima (Caričin Grad), but the arrangement was still not fully architecturally consolidated in the early ninth century (Fatih Camii in Trilye). The question of when the pastophoria assumed their present functions remains open (Marinis 2010, 292). Certain actions of the Prothesis rite and their symbolism were connected with the architectural setting (diminutive apse symbolizing both the cave of Bethlehem and the cave of the Burial) and influenced its decoration (Marinis 2010, 292–93).

Galleries, areas above the side aisles and narthex, are a common feature of Byzantine basilicas (Figure 20.2). They were used by catechumens and penitents, and occasionally women (Mathews 1971, 128–32), although the latter were not restricted to these spaces (Taft 1998). These functions belong to the Early Byzantine period, explaining the general disappearance of galleries in later centuries. In several Constantinopolitan churches, most notably Hagia Sophia, the imperial party attended the liturgy in the galleries (Mathews 1971, 132–33) and such usage persisted in later periods both in Constantinople (Marinis 2014, 91–92) and elsewhere (Tantsës 2008). Some religious and solemn rites such as priestly ordinations and loyalty oaths were administered there as well (Taft 1998, 59).

Liturgical ritual prior to Iconoclasm featured stational processions outside of the church building (Baldovin 1987), with many solemn entries, which influenced the formation of certain architectural features such as atria, porticos, narthexes, and multiple entrance doors. The atrium was a common element of Early Byzantine basilicas. Possibly with a dual set of sources in both Old Testament and Roman architecture, it featured a fountain (*loutēr, phialē*), which was both a decorative element and a source of running water used for ablutions before services (Wybrew 1989, 47–48). The open yard with porticos along its sides was also well suited to accommodate large crowds of people awaiting the solemn procession that would arrive at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy

(Mathews 1971, 145–47). These functions were discontinued in the Middle Byzantine period, when the atrium rarely appears (Nea Ekklēsia, St. George in Mangana). However, the use of the fountain for the Great Blessing of Waters on Epiphany, which started in the sixth century, was continued (Marinis 2014, 95–97; Stanković 2017, 437–48).

During the seventh through ninth centuries, the economic decline and monastic ascendancy influenced the move to fully celebrate the Divine Liturgy indoors, and once-large processions (Little and Great Entrances) were reduced to symbolic and ritualized actions accommodated within a shrunken nave. The most widespread church type of the Middle Byzantine period (ninth–twelfth centuries) was the cross-in-square, appearing in Constantinople, Asia Minor, the Balkans, south Italy, and ancient Rus', and ranging from monastic, through parochial and domestic, to palatial contexts, into later times (see Figure 21.1). The debate on the reasons for the emergence of this type is still open, but a few factors seem to be certain: its small size; its simple structure easy to construct; an openness in the interior, fitting for small and homogeneous congregations; a suitability for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the intimate form it had acquired; and its central and domed form with a pyramidal structure in accordance with the symbolic meanings assigned to the church building; and good accommodation of a hierarchically organized iconographic program (Mango 1976, 178; Marinis 2012, 346–47). These aspects, as well as the cruciform shape and the presence of a dome, may have led to this type being regarded as sacred and to its choice for rock-cut churches in Cappadocia, where no structural reasons could have dictated such a solution (Ousterhout 1998, 97). Other church types, old but reduced in scale or totally new, were also used. There were typological variations, often dependent on the type of congregation and its financial means and technical skills. However, the interior arrangements in all churches followed essentially the same structure: a tripartite sanctuary, a naos centralized in plan and domed, and an oblong narthex as wide as the nave. The persistence of basilicas (both old and newly built) in urban areas well up to the Late Byzantine period can be explained by the fact that the ritual of cathedrals and parish churches was more conservative than that of monasteries (Taft 1992, 55).

The Middle Byzantine sanctuary was smaller but more complex than earlier, with specific furnishings associated with the liturgy becoming fixed and part of the architecture, most notably in the prothesis (see Figures 21.2, 21.3). The central area, the *bēma*, still housed the altar in the middle, often covered with a ciborium, while the *synthronon* was reduced to a low bench along the curved wall of the apse or dispensed with altogether. At the same time, the whole space became more closed-off and private, corresponding to similar developments in the celebration of the presbyterial components of the Divine Liturgy (Wybrew 1989, 114–23, and 133–34): the *templon* grew more opaque, as the sacredness of the liturgical actions in the sanctuary had been emphasized and the need to keep them secret from the laity had risen. Initially, the openings above the parapet slabs were likely closed only with curtains, but later images of saints, first painted on the east piers and decorated with marble frames (Figure 21.3),

were transferred to the panel icons inserted between the parapet and architrave of the templon (Lidov 2000; Gerstel 2006).

In the nave, the centrally positioned domed compartment may have rendered the canopied ambo of early basilicas redundant and the reduced size of space made its accommodation impractical. Both these factors may have given rise to its elimination. The gaze of the worshipper became equally directed to the apse, with the depiction of the *Theotokos*, and to the dome, with the Christ *Pantokratōr*. Thus the interior further contributes to the organization of the ritual, which became more central than longitudinal (Ousterhout 1998, 95). The centralized core is in some churches accompanied by additional aisles, ambulatories, and chapels, which provided space for a growing number of liturgical and extra-liturgical functions, most notably funerary and commemorative ones (Marinis 2014, 77–90). Also, specific planning solutions appear, answering certain local liturgical needs: lateral conches (*choroi*) accommodated the antiphonal chanting by two choirs of monks on Mt. Athos (Mylonas 1984) and triple sanctuaries (with accompanying furnishings) provided several venues for Eucharistic celebrations in a single church and attached funerary chambers enabled multiple burials of closely connected individuals in Cappadocia (Mathews 1982, 131–34; Teteriatnikov 1996).

The narthex similarly houses particular liturgical activities. It takes some of the functions of the atrium, by now disappeared, those essentially associated with the transition between the outer, profane, and inner, sacred space. Also, certain sacraments and liturgical rites that symbolically fit the narthex's liminal character take place there. These include baptism, monastic tonsure, confessions, funerals, Blessing of the Waters (on Epiphany and other feasts), and the Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday (Marinis 2010, 294–95; Stanković 2017, chapter 3). This same transitory position, that is, part of the church building, but not of the main Eucharistic space, recommended the narthex as the place for privileged burials—founders, benefactors, abbots, saints—as a way to circumvent the Byzantine prohibition against burials inside churches (for the legislation, see Marinis 2009). Despite being a vestibule, or perhaps because of this status, the narthex was assigned the celebration of several segments of daily services, usually those connected to entries and exits from the church, such as Hours preceding Matins and Vespers, Compline, etc. (Stanković 2017, chapter 3).

With many functions accommodated in the narthex, monastic churches would often get an additional narthex (exonarthex, as at Vatopedi Monastery on Mt. Athos, Figure 21.5), porch, or ambulatory, which served as a stage for the beginning parts of various processions, including funerals; such a section often housed a holy water font (Kandić 1998–1999) and tombs of less eminent people, as the space was further away from the sanctuary (Marinis 2012, 354–55). Upper-floor extra spaces sometimes appear in different kinds of churches. Galleries remain in large city churches, especially when intended to accommodate local rulers and their retinues (Rus' and Late Byzantine Epirus and Mystras) (Tantsēs 2008). Monastic churches usually have a second story only above the narthex, with rooms and chapels accessible only from outside, but still allowing



FIGURE 21.5. Vatopedi Monastery, Mt. Athos, katholikon, interior of the exonarthex (constructed in the early eleventh century, wall paintings completed in 1311/12) looking southeast. Photo: Nebojša Stanković.

visual contact with the naos. This apartment of sorts was reserved for an individual of special status in the monastery (either *ktētor* or abbot) for his private devotions (Ćurčić 2000; such an arrangement was provided at Great Lavra on Mt. Athos, which was echoed in a few other Athonite monasteries: Stanković 2017, chapter 5).

The Middle Byzantine period was characterized by the appending of *pareklēsia* to the main liturgical space (Ćurčić 1977). The addition of chapels may have expressed a donor's personal devotion to one or more particular saints, the space functioning as a gift in exchange for saints' intercession for donors' salvation (Marinis 2010, 298). Within this trend, there were cases with chapels fully integrated into the overall design (Nea Ekklēsia, Church of Constantine Lips, *Katholikon* of Hosios Loukas), pointing to a well-established religious practice, as well as to careful architectural planning.

During the Late Byzantine period (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries), the church space remained essentially the same and even the same church types persisted, with the cross-in-square remaining dominant (e.g. Hagia Sophia of Trebizond and Hilandar, Figures 21.1, 21.4/Color Plate 12). However, the core church was usually expanded through the accumulation of additional spaces and rooms (chapels, exonarthexes, porticos, ambulatories). This was an architectural answer to the religious ritual growing more complex and developing private expressions, particularly in funerary accommodations (Marinis 2009; Marinis 2012, 354–55). The overall design was sometimes of greater

importance than the interior function, leading to symmetrical distributions of architectural elements such as domes, regardless of the functions accommodated within, as in the five-domed designs of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki and the Theotokos church at Gračanica (Figure 16.5). Occasionally, additional Eucharistic spaces were fitted inside the church, commonly in the narthex or ambulatory, set apart from the rest of the space only by liturgical furnishings and wall paintings (as at Dečani) and/or accentuated with certain architectural forms that had become associated with a sacred (liturgical) space, such as a dome (katholikon of Hilandar, churches in Thessaloniki). Several churches in Thessaloniki feature integrally built ambulatories (*peristōa*), suggesting some particular local use(s) of these spaces (Hadjitryphonos 2004). On the other hand, the *litē* on Mt. Athos exhibits what appears to be an integration of smaller spaces into one larger one to form an expanded narthex. This solution was likely devised to accommodate certain monastic services of the Neo-Sabbaitic liturgical rule (Nicholl 1997) and, together with the triconch Athonite church plan, gets disseminated widely (Serbia, Romania; see Milanović and Johnson chapters, this volume) along with the new liturgical system, which was favored by the Hesychasts. From the late twelfth century, belfries appear in churches built in the areas exposed to contacts with the West, including Serbia (Kandić 1978), Greece, and Constantinople (Marinis 2014, 97–98). However, *sēmantra* (sound-signaling devices made of iron or wood) were present in Byzantine churches even earlier, likely housed inside entrance porticos (Stanković 2017, 433–37).

## ACCOMMODATING THE HOLY (PLACES, PEOPLE, ARTIFACTS) AND PILGRIMS

---

Pilgrimage did not have the same place in the devotional life of Byzantium as it had in the West and certainly did not exercise the same impact on architecture. It was more influential in early centuries, when Constantine's patronage of Christianity yielded special architectural treatments of sites associated with Christ and his martyrs. Some of these were fashioned as structures with centralized plans, but most of them were basilicas, occasionally featuring certain additions or modifications that accommodated either the local peculiarities of the site and event, or the patterns of veneration, as the Nativity Basilica at Bethlehem, the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai (Ousterhout 2008, 355–57). Later centuries saw the rise of holy men who were visited for spiritual counsel. Their ascetic abodes in the countryside were gradually transformed into pilgrimage sites (as at Qal'at Sim'an). The surviving structures show a great variety of architectural solutions, often based on regular church types of the period, making it hard to establish what kind of influence the pilgrimage, if at all, exercised. Hagia Sophia became a pilgrims' destination

in its own right (Elsner 2008, 741), for both its collection of relics and its unsurpassed size and magnificence.

The cult of relics, which gradually became more important than holy places (Elsner 2008, 745; Marinis and Ousterhout 2015, 170–71), led to their collection and display, permanently or on special occasions. The latter was more common: relics were securely kept somewhere in the church and brought out when desired. The holiness of a relic apparently required an appropriate sacred space while being stored, hence the depositing in the sanctuary, a chapel (Marinis and Ousterhout 2015, 157–60), or the sacristy, which occasionally could be furnished and functioned as a chapel (Stanković 2017, 363–64). Icons were also considered holy objects, but were more readily displayed, especially those that were believed to perform miracles or provide divine protection (Elsner 2008, 743). The settings for icons ranged from simple shrines (*proskynētaria* and canopies) to entire chapels (like the *Portaitissa* at Ivērōn).

## MONASTIC AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

---

Byzantine monasticism developed a whole range of various religious buildings and spatial settings. Even utilitarian buildings within a monastic compound are infused with religious ideas and practices (Popović 2007). The most prominent is certainly the *trapeza* (refectory), a communal extension of the church and thus located close to it, ideally just opposite its entrance (Popović 1998). Apart from reasons of practicality, such disposition was influenced by tradition and historical models (Egypt and the Holy Land), as well as by certain processions between the church and refectory (Stanković 2017, chapter 3). This relationship was common for the coenobitic style of monasticism, which dominated the Middle and Late Byzantine periods. Churches of anchorites and idiorrhythmic groups are small, often reduced to the size of a chapel, and indistinguishable outside from the rest of the monastic compound. A hermit's abode can have a chapel attached to his cell or a mere oratory niche as part of the cell. Both situations are often found in cave dwellings, such as the *Enkleistra* of Neophytos the Recluse.

There were other architectural manifestations of devotional life in Byzantium. Chapels independent of a congregational church were quite common, located at private homes (Mathews 1982; Bowes 2005), in fortresses, and dispersed throughout a monastery—located in towers and within dormitories, attached to economic clusters outside the walls (Popović 1995–1996), or serving as cemetery chapels and ossuaries (Androudis 1997). The plan and form of these chapels are usually simple and guided by practical concerns, liturgical furnishings reduced to essentials. However, individual devotions, occasionally disclosed by architectural and artistic evidence, did matter in setting these religious installations.

## STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FUNCTION AND FORM

---

There are certain issues and problems in the study of the architectural material in relation to function, in this case liturgy and devotional practices. A common misconception is that form necessarily and fully follows the function, that Byzantine churches and their segments directly reflect the liturgy and were primarily meant to accommodate it. In some cases, the form and furnishings indeed were provided to stage a specific rite or action, as in the Early Byzantine period (Mathews 1971), but this is less so later (Marinis 2014, 114–18). Additionally, pictorial decoration and its placement in a defined part of the church often reflect the function that takes place there (Ševčenko 2008, 733–34). However, the architecture results from a combination of demands and considerations (Marinis 2011, 27), one of them being the ritual, the performance of which was often reciprocally influenced by the shape of the spatial setting. And even then, there is not necessarily any direct correlation between the space and function (Mango 1976, 10; Marinis 2010, 284–85; Marinis 2011, 30–33). Moreover, many functions overlap in the church space, making futile any search for a direct determinism between function and form in the formation of the liturgical space. This is most notable in the nave and narthex, but even certain elements in the sanctuary are not the product only of functional demands, but of geometry, structural necessities, or symbolism. Nonetheless, the examination of function and meaning assigned to the church or its parts remains essential for understanding its form, organization, and artistic decoration.

The main sources in ascertaining the function are liturgical charters (*typika*), which prescribed services and rites to be conducted daily or on certain occasions (Thomas and Hero 2000, for monastic *typika*). However, unless the liturgical action is a novelty, or there are special requirements embedded in the office or certain spatial specificities of the actual church building, *typika* rarely provide instructions on where and how a service should be performed. Liturgical treatises are sometimes concerned with church space and its symbolism within the liturgy, but it remains unclear whether the meaning influenced the form or the other way around. For all these reasons, a researcher has to turn to other scarce textual evidence (Ševčenko 2008, 731–32) or to the actual ritual preserved and still practiced in some places like Mt. Athos. The latter has to be used with great caution, though, since what is customary today is not necessarily identical to the medieval performance.

In this respect, the awareness of liturgical reforms (Pott 2010) and changing use of a liturgical space through time is important (Marinis 2011, 30). The Studite reform (ninth century) was a liturgical watershed (Taft 1992, 52–66; Pott 2010, 115–51), which is paralleled by the obvious shift in church architecture. However, the exact relationship, that is, whether the reform initiated certain changes in architecture or was influenced by architectural developments that started in the previous centuries, requires substantial examination. A similar inquiry can be urged regarding the Neo-Sabbaite liturgical



reform (thirteenth–fourteenth centuries), synthesized on Mt. Athos (Taft 1992, 78–84), where it both yielded a new architectural feature, the litē narthex, and embraced an existing one, the triconch naos.

Due to a greater amount of evidence, both archaeological and textual, from Constantinople, the architecture of the capital and its developments are often taken as representative of the entire geographically vast and culturally diverse empire. A better knowledge of liturgical and devotional traditions in the provinces should be pursued in the future. In addition to this, issues such as city churches of later periods and the impact of lay piety still remain largely uninvestigated.

The materials and situations presented in this chapter illustrate a varied and complex treatment of the Byzantine church building as a setting for the liturgy and devotions. The space and its form were not a mere backdrop of the ritual, but interacted with it, by both responding to it and shaping it. The architecture follows shifting paradigms in worship, but the latter likewise gets affected when accommodated within a space that carries certain meanings. This interaction bears witness to a great vitality and responsiveness of church architecture and ritual, as well as to the creativity of those who conceived and used sacred space in Byzantium.

## REFERENCES

- Androudis, P. 1997. *Les Églises cimetiérales monastiques du Mont Athos: Contribution à étude des églises funéraires byzantines et post-byzantines des monastères de la Sainte Montagne (Hagion Oros, Grèce)* (Villeneuve d'Ascq).
- ArtByzEmp.
- Babić, G. 1969. *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques* (Paris).
- Baldovin, J. F. 1987. *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome).
- Bogdanović, J. 2017. *The Framing of Sacred Space: The Canopy and the Byzantine Church* (New York).
- Bowes, K. 2005. "Personal Devotions and Private Chapels." In *A People's History of Christianity, Vol. 2: Late Ancient Christianity*, edited by V. Burrus, 188–210 (Minneapolis).
- Ćurčić, S. 1977. "Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches." *JSAH* 36, 2: 94–110.
- Ćurčić, S. 2000. "Смисао и функција катихумена у позновизантијској и српској архитектури." In *Манастир Жича*, edited by G. Subotić, 83–93 (Kraljevo).
- Elsner, J. 2008. "Art and Pilgrimage." *OHBS*, 741–49.
- Gerstel, S. E. J., ed. 2006. *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West* (Washington, DC).
- Hadjitryphonos, E. 2004. *Το Περιστάω στην υστεροβυζαντινή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική: Σχεδιασμός και λειτουργία* (Thessaloniki).
- Jensen, R. M. 2005. "Baptismal Rites and Architecture." In *A People's History of Christianity, Vol. 2: Late Ancient Christianity*, edited by V. Burrus, 117–44 (Minneapolis).

- Kalopissi-Verti, Sophia. 2006. "The Proskynetaria of the Templon and Narthex: Form, Imagery, Spatial Connection, and Reception." In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 107–32 (Washington, DC).
- Kandić, O. M. 1978. "Куле-звоници уз српске цркве XII–XIV века." *Зборник Матице српске за ликовне уметности* 14: 3–75.
- Kandić, O. 1998–1999. "Fonts for the Blessing of the Waters in Serbian Medieval Churches." *Zograf* 27: 61–77.
- Lidov, A., ed. 2000. *The Iconostasis: Origins—Evolution—Symbolism* (Moscow).
- Mango, C. 1976. *Byzantine Architecture* (New York).
- Marinis, V. 2009. "Tombs and Burials in the Monastery tou Libos in Constantinople." *DOP* 63: 147–66.
- Marinis, V. 2010. "Defining Liturgical Space." In *The Byzantine World*, edited by P. Stephenson, 284–302 (London and New York).
- Marinis, V. 2011. "Some Notes on the Functional Approach in the Study of Byzantine Architecture: The Case of Constantinople." In *New Approaches to Medieval Architecture*, edited by R. O. Bork, W. W. Clark, and A. McGehee, 21–33 (Farnham and Burlington, VT).
- Marinis, V. 2012. "Structure, Agency, Ritual, and the Byzantine Church." In *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, edited by B. D. Wescoat and R. G. Ousterhout, 338–64 (Cambridge and New York).
- Marinis, V. 2014. *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople: Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries* (Cambridge and New York).
- Marinis, V., and R. Ousterhout. 2015. "'Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them': Relics and the Byzantine Church Building (9th–15th Centuries)." In *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, edited by C. Hahn and H. A. Klein, 153–72 (Washington, DC).
- Mathews, T. F. 1971. *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, PA and London).
- Mathews, T. F. 1982. "'Private' Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Toward a Re-Appraisal," *CA* 30: 125–38.
- McVey, K. E. 1983. "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol." *DOP* 37: 91–121.
- Mylonas, P. M. 1984. "Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite." *CA* 32: 89–112.
- Nicholl, G. 1997. "A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex." In *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis, 1050–1200*, edited by M. Mullett and A. Kirby, 285–308 (Belfast).
- Ousterhout, R. 1998. "The Holy Space: Architecture and the Liturgy." In *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, edited by L. Safran, 81–120 (University Park, PA).
- Ousterhout, R. 2008. "Churches and Monasteries." In *OHBS*, 353–72.
- Ousterhout, R. 2010. "New Temples and New Solomons: The Rhetoric of Byzantine Architecture." In *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, edited by P. Magdalino and R. Nelson, 223–53 (Washington, DC).
- Peschlow, U. 2006. "Dividing Interior Space in Early Byzantine Churches: The Barriers between the Nave and Aisles." In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 53–71 (Washington, DC).

- Popović, S. 1995–1996. “Распоред капела у византијским манастирима.” *Саопштења* 27–28: 23–39.
- Popović, S. 1998. “The Trapeza in Coenobitic Monasteries: Architectural and Spiritual Contexts.” *DOP* 52: 281–303.
- Popović, S. 2007. “Dividing the Indivisible: The Monastery Space—Secular and Sacred.” *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 44: 47–67.
- Pott, T. 2010. *Byzantine Liturgical Reform: A Study of Liturgical Change in the Byzantine Tradition*. Translated by P. Meyendorff (Crestwood, NY).
- Schulz, H.-J. 1986. *Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression*. Translated by M. J. O’Connell (New York).
- Ševčenko, N. P. 2008. “Art and Liturgy.” In *OHBS*, 731–40.
- Stanković, N. 2017. “At the Threshold of the Heavens: The Narthex and Adjacent Spaces in Middle Byzantine Churches of Mount Athos (10th–11th Centuries)—Architecture, Function, and Meaning.” PhD diss., Princeton University.
- Symeon of Thessalonika. *The Liturgical Commentaries*. Edited and translated by Steven Hawkes-Teeple (Toronto 2011).
- Taft, R. F. 1992. *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN).
- Taft, R. F. 1998. “Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When—and Why?” *DOP* 52: 27–87.
- Tantsēs, A. 2008. Το υπερώο στη Βυζαντινή ναοδομία. PhD diss., Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης.
- Teteriatnikov, N. B. 1996. *The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia* (Rome).
- Thomas, J., and A. Hero, eds. 2000. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of Surviving Founders’ Typika and Testaments* (Washington, DC).
- Wybrew, H. 1989. *The Orthodox Liturgy: The Development of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite* (London).
- Yasin, A. M. 2015. “Sacred Installations: The Material Conditions of Relic Collections in Late Antique Churches.” In *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, edited by C. Hahn and H. A. Klein, 133–51 (Washington, DC).

## FURTHER READING

- De Blaauw, S. 1991. “Architecture and Liturgy in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Traditions and Trends in Modern Scholarship.” *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 33: 1–34.
- Doig, A. 2008. *Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT).
- Hadjitryphonos, E., and F. Karagiannē, eds. 2006. *Βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική και λατρευτική πράξη (Εισαγωγικές ομιλίες, θεματικές και ελεύθερες παρεμβάσεις), Πρακτικά* (Thessaloniki).
- Krueger, D., ed. 2006. *A People’s History of Christianity, Vol. 3: Byzantine Christianity* (Minneapolis).
- Lidov, A., ed. 2006. *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* (Moscow).
- Marinis, V. 2015. “The Historia Ekklesiastike kai Mystike Theoria: A Symbolic Understanding of the Byzantine Church Building.” *BZ* 108: 753–70.

- Mueller-Jourdan, P. 2005. *Typologie spatio-temporelle de l'ecclēsia byzantine: La Mystagogie de Maxime le Confesseur dans la culture philosophique de l'antiquité tardive* (Leiden and Boston).
- Popović, S. 1997. "Are *typika* Sources for Architecture?: The Case of the Monasteries of the Theotokos Evergetis, Chilandari and Studenica." In *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis, 1050–1200*, edited by M. Mullett and A. Kirby, 266–84 (Belfast).



## CHAPTER 22

---

# SECULAR ARCHITECTURE: DOMESTIC

---

CAROLYN S. SNIVELY

## INTRODUCTION

---

THE geographic focus of this discussion of Byzantine domestic architecture, from the late fourth to fifteenth centuries, will be on the Balkans and Asia Minor. Although more dwellings exist than any other type of structure within a settlement or outside it, emphasis has often been on large public buildings or the peristyle house rather than the range of housing units and their multifunctional nature. Those who study domestic architecture tend to look at palaces and other grand and richly decorated structures; only recently has attention been paid to lower-class and rural dwellings.

The chances of excavation often dictate our knowledge of ancient housing, which consists too frequently of isolated mosaic floors and incomplete ground plans. Preservation is usually limited to foundations or socles of walls so that nothing is known about windows, and upper floors are signaled only by surviving stairs. Compartments within houses are identified by shape and decoration, while the information provided by furnishings or artifact assemblages about possible, multiple functions of space is not collected or is ignored. Nevertheless, despite many excavated but unpublished houses, Byzantine dwellings may be described in some detail.

## EARLY BYZANTINE HOUSING

---

Early Byzantine architecture developed from its Greek and Roman predecessors, influenced across the Mediterranean world by local conditions, building traditions, and available materials. Many Roman houses continued to exist into the Early Byzantine period; these might be redecorated, renovated, or rebuilt because of damage or destruction

by earthquake, fire, or violence, or to keep up with the latest styles. New examples of the peristyle house became scarce and then ceased in the sixth century, but the basic concept of rooms arranged around a courtyard continued into the Byzantine period. New dwellings were created, sometimes by subdivision of public buildings or urban villas, in other cases by fresh constructions. As the configuration of towns changed because of the elimination of temples, buildings for municipal government, theaters, and some baths, new spaces became available for residential construction.

No Byzantine city exhibits the state of preservation seen at Pompeii, so questions about zoning or organization of residential quarters must be answered from partially investigated sites or literary sources. A number of legal regulations governed housing, its construction and reconstruction, and relations between residents of adjacent units. In addition to section C.8.10 of the *Code of Justinian* and later Byzantine laws, unofficial and local documents were compiled. In Constantinople—as in Late Antique Palestine, according to Julian of Ascalon—the regulations often refer to multistoried apartment buildings constructed around a central courtyard. Among the concerns are the type and location of windows, access to balconies from the street, and protection of the view, in Constantinople especially the view of the sea (Saliou 2007; Skalec 2012).

Zoning is never mentioned, and a novel of the emperor Leo VI even repealed the prohibition against intramural burial, no longer relevant by the tenth century. In fifth-century Constantinople the greatest number of houses and apartment buildings were located in northern regions VI, VII, and X, near the Golden Horn, but region X also included three palatial residences belonging to women of the imperial family (Magdalino 2001, 53–55; Anderson 2016). In northeastern Thessaloniki, space unused in the Roman period was available for the construction of peristyle houses (Karagianni 2012, 71). After a late fourth-century reorganization, peristyle houses spread across the middle terrace at Stobi in Macedonia (Figure 22.1); smaller dwellings were found on the northwest hill, in the southwest quarter, and in an extramural suburb. Clearly, people with money and influence were able to acquire more desirable building plots and houses, but the location of residential quarters depended on local conditions.

Work of whatever kind, for example, political, bureaucratic, governmental, professional, commercial, craft, and industrial, was closely associated with living quarters. The proprietor of a shop often lived behind or above it; the working space of a sculptor or shoemaker might form part of his house. Although a great deal of business, such as patron-client interactions or dining with one's political or business associates, had taken place in the Roman residence, the lack of identifiable governmental buildings in Early Byzantium suggests that more space for administrative and bureaucratic activities was located within residential complexes (Ellis 1988, 569). The *praetorium* of a civil governor, although considered a public building and differing in certain respects from the usual elite residence, nevertheless provides one obvious example (Lavan 2001). Another is the episcopal residence, where spaces for judicial proceedings, charitable endeavors, fundraising, religious instruction, and housing of clergy and guests might be required (Müller-Wiener 1989; Ceylan 2007). The presence of nonresidential activities complicates the modern interpretation and definition of ancient dwellings

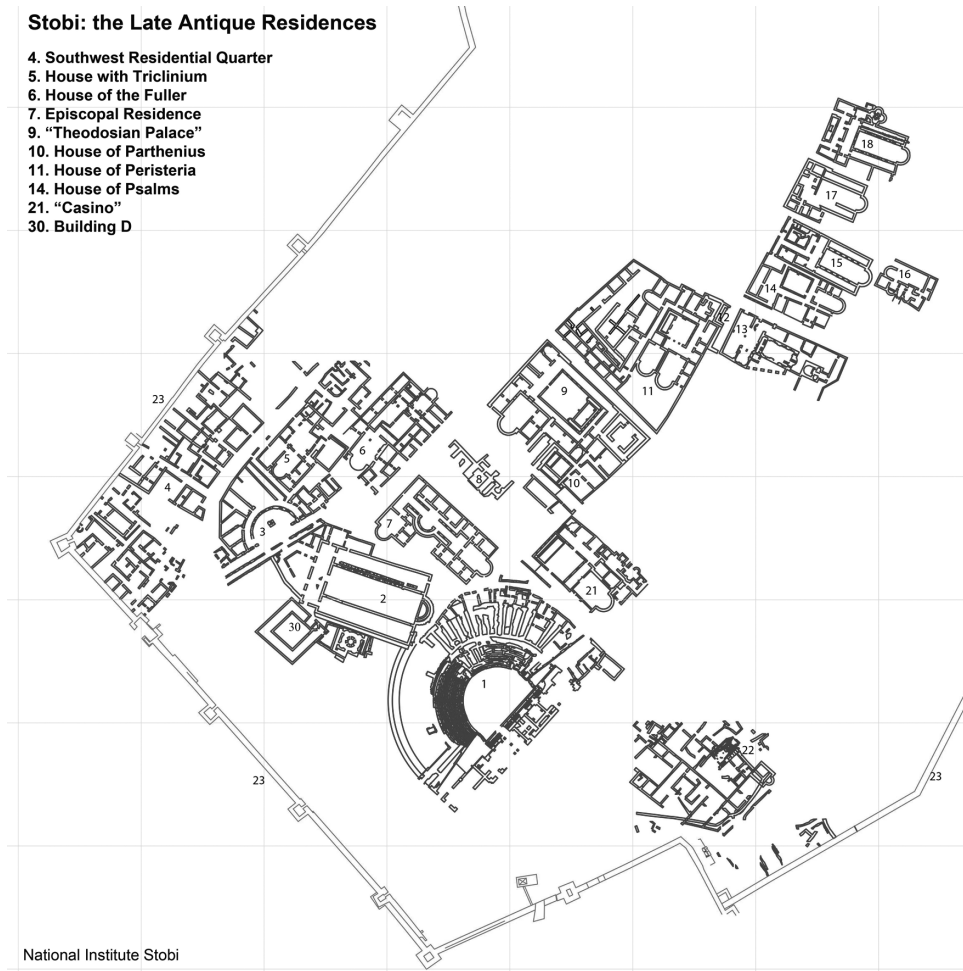


FIGURE 22.1. Plan of southwest Stobi. National Institution Stobi.

and residential complexes. Perhaps residents of an Early Byzantine city thought less about architectural types of buildings than about their functions—where in the mass of residential structures did one go to buy shoes or tools, present a petition, or pay one’s taxes.

A major issue in Early Byzantine architecture has been the subdivision of both public buildings and large houses in order to create apartments, small dwellings, and industrial or commercial establishments (Ellis 1988, 567–69; Ellis 2000, 110–12; Saradi 1998). Here too the legal sources provide information, of which the most relevant is that those who took over porticos, streets, and public buildings were not “squatters” but wealthy individuals who paid rents or fines to the authorities and in turn leased the subdivided properties to shopkeepers, craftsmen, and families (Saradi 1998, 18–20). The situation of former public buildings, such as theaters, stadia, and amphitheaters, is less clear. The



architectural pieces, especially the very reusable seat blocks, were removed and employed in new construction; houses were frequently built on the abandoned sites.

The situation with subdivision of private houses is somewhat different. Natural disasters and barbarian invasions sometimes explain abandonment and reuse; owners died or fled for their lives, and their houses were occupied by new people (Saradi 1998, 25–28). The subdivision of residences was not a new phenomenon, as illustrated at Pompeii. A house is a piece of property that may be used for various purposes and, given the various legal possibilities, it is “illegitimate to infer from the splitting up, renting off, and changing usage of a house that its owner has fallen on hard times” (Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 132–33).

The subdivision of houses, beginning in the fourth century, has been attributed to flight of the *decurion* class or general inability of the upper class to maintain large urban residences. But spaces created by new walls, often stone with mud mortar, in those houses may be identified as apartments and workshops; in Early Byzantine Egypt, leases preserved on papyrus provide descriptions of porticos, courtyards, *triclinia*, and parts or combinations thereof. The people living or working in those rental units were paying the owner, who might have divided and rented his house but kept a part of it for his own use (Saradi, 1998, 21–22).

Although a number of Late Antique cities displayed one outstanding complex like an imperial residence or governor’s mansion, many cities displayed a significant number of substantial houses. Both Thessaloniki and Athens have more than twenty peristyle houses; Stobi, five or six; Ephesus has several areas of elaborate houses; and Aphrodisias, six or seven (Baldini Lippolis 2001). These cities were often diocesan or provincial capitals; otherwise, location or pilgrimage kept them vibrant. The number of substantial houses suggests that they were inhabited not only by the elite but also by the upper middle class or alternatively, as Bowes argues, by the new men, “the *principales*, who seem to work in concert with imperial officials and the remnants of civic government” (Bowes 2010, 76). Another possible conclusion is that concentration of power and competition among members of the upper classes was taking place in a relatively small number of cities in Late Antiquity (Bowes 2010, 64–76; Mitchell 1996).

The peristyle house, described as the “ideal Roman house” and said “to represent the classical way of life,” is the domestic type most discussed (Ellis 1988, 565). Both the concept and numerous examples were inherited from the Roman period. The defining feature was the courtyard, flanked by colonnaded porticos on two to four sides. Behind the porticos stood rooms serving a variety of familial and public purposes, identified as reception rooms, dining rooms (*triclinia*), bedrooms, storerooms, and kitchen; larger houses might include audience chambers, secondary courtyards, private suites, baths, quarters for servants and slaves, even a private chapel. The arrangement of rooms in relation to the main courtyard and to one another varied by region and according to the needs and choices of the owner (Ellis 2000, 41). To what extent the organization of the peristyle house in Late Antiquity reflects the concentration of wealth and power in fewer hands together with changes in personal patronage and a greater need for privacy remains open for debate (Bowes 2010, 43–54).

Many well-known houses and villas belong to the category of the peristyle house, such as the Villa of the Falconer in Argos, the Atrium House at Aphrodisias, and the villa above the theater at Ephesus, along with scores of houses that made use of the very traditional arrangement of a courtyard surrounded by porticos and rooms. The major Early Byzantine innovation was the use of apses in domestic architecture, in triclinia and elsewhere (Bowes 2010, 54–60).

In Thessaloniki, more than twenty urban villas of varying size (some as large as 1,500 square meters) have been investigated. Although they belong to the category of peristyle houses, the defining feature for the excavators was the triclinium with a raised northern apse. Decorated with mosaics and *opus sectile*, these fourth- to fifth-century houses survived into the seventh century (Karagianni 2012, 70–75). Stobi offers several examples of completely excavated, late fourth-century peristyle houses that survived, after renovation, into the late sixth century (Figure 22.2). Apparently it was customary at Stobi to have a pool at the end of the peristyle court and a fountain in the triclinium. The House of Peristeria and the misnamed Casino even included private baths.

Finding the houses of the poor is surprisingly elusive. If subdivided public buildings and peristyle houses were not taken over by “squatters” but instead became apartments, often of several rooms, the rent-paying occupants were not destitute. One- or two-room houses, often next to courtyards, and shops or workshops combined with living space probably provide our most accessible view of lower-class housing (Ellis 2006; Bavant 2007). The homeless existed in this period as well.

In the Balkans, with the exception of places such as Thessaloniki and Athens, monumental housing ceased to exist along with the majority of cities, and little is known about



FIGURE 22.2. The peristyle courtyard of the “Theodosian Palace” at Stobi, from west. National Institution Stobi.

seventh- to ninth-century dwellings. Philippi offers a rare example of Early Byzantine houses that experienced numerous renovations and reconstructions but continued to function into the ninth or tenth century (Gounaris and Velenis 1996).

## MIDDLE AND LATE BYZANTINE DWELLINGS

---

Earlier, it was posited that “There is no such thing as the Byzantine house, only Byzantine houses, of many types and categories, each meriting individual study” (Bouras 1982, 1). Now, however, it seems possible to state that, after regional variations and local availability of building materials are taken into account, many Byzantine houses in Greece appear to fall into two or three major categories: the courtyard house and the “longhouse” of one or more stories.

The courtyard dwelling was a typically urban form, found most often in the center of towns with Classical or Roman predecessors such as Athens, Corinth, Thebes, etc. Such complexes provided privacy, since the courtyard was usually not entered directly from the street, but it gave entry to most or all of the rooms surrounding it. Relatively large, with several rooms and a great deal of storage space, courtyard houses have been tentatively identified as belonging to merchants who dealt in agricultural or industrial products (Sigalos 2004, 62–63).

Recent excavations in the Athenian Agora revealed a number of Middle Byzantine courtyard houses on both sides of a street; they followed the orientation of Late Antique and earlier buildings and often used earlier walls as foundations (Figure 22.3).

The number of rooms varied from three or four to nine. Storage containers of various sizes and types were set densely into the floors of almost every room; they included *pithoi* (both ceramic and ones built of mortar and pieces of tile or stones) for liquids, and large pits with a flat floor, perhaps granaries. Wells, cisterns, and *bothroi* or cesspits were also noted. Camp assumed that domestic quarters were located on an upper floor. A small chapel, filled with ossuary cists, was tucked in among the houses (Camp 2007, 629–33, with earlier bibliography).

The identification of rock-cut complexes at Çanlı Kilise and Selime-Yaprakhisar in the Peristrema valley in western Cappadocia as residential rather than monastic has opened a new chapter in the study of Byzantine housing as well as providing examples of rural courtyard dwellings (Ousterhout 2005; Kalas 2006). A courtyard, usually carved into the sloping cliff face but sometimes completely quarried into bedrock, was the primary organizational feature. On one side of the courtyard rose a rock-cut architectural façade; at the bottom, an open arcade led into a portico. A large rectangular hall was often located behind the portico and a funerary chapel with burials nearby. Other identifiable rooms included the kitchen, a stable with mangers, cisterns, and a dovecote (for fertilizer), while the purpose of other rooms around the courtyard, frequently on two



stories, could not be defined. Details of plan and elevation in these tenth- to eleventh-century complexes reflect local building material and tradition; they were created by quarrying the bedrock and leaving sections of it for floors, walls, some furniture, and the roof.

Pergamon, a Hellenistic and Roman city located near the west coast of Asia Minor, illustrates another development. Nearly abandoned until the eleventh century, it expanded during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but fell to the Turks ca. 1315. Despite being the seat of a bishop and the center of a military district, Byzantine Pergamon was more of an agricultural village than a city. The only public buildings were churches; facilities for crafts and trade were incorporated into the houses. Walls were built of stone (often *spolia*; see Kiilerich chapter, this volume) and mud mortar, with tile roofs. Surviving stretches of ancient walls were reused. The central space was a walled courtyard entered from the street; usually three or four rooms were arranged around or beside the courtyard, with exceptions of some one-room dwellings and a few larger houses. What might be called the living room might display a paved floor; a brick-and-tile fireplace and pottery vessels identified the kitchen; pithoi indicated the storeroom. Another room might serve as a stable. The remains of stairs point to second stories in a few houses (Rheidt 1991).

The rural, agricultural nature of the settlement at Pergamon was typical of Byzantine settlements in the Greek world. Already for the Early Byzantine period, surveys in Macedonia and Greece registered both large numbers and a wide variety of rural sites: fortified and unfortified villages, villas, guard posts, farmsteads, refuges, fortresses, etc. (Dunn 1997). Ruralization had been occurring gradually already in the Early Byzantine world; surveys suggest that most people in the later Byzantine period lived in rural environments, agricultural or pastoral, in small towns and villages, rather than in cities (Kourelis 2005, 120; Vionis 2014, 319).

Although provided with courtyards, a number of houses at Pergamon could be described as longhouses. This structure in several variations was the predominant rural house type in the Late Byzantine period (and undoubtedly earlier as well). The most basic form consisted of a rectangular house, subdivided into two spaces, one for livestock and the other for people. Variations included an L-shape, houses on slopes with two floor levels or adjacent spaces at different levels, and two-story houses (Vionis 2014, 331). The small, one- or two-room houses noted on the periphery of Byzantine towns such as Chalkis and Beroia (Sigalos 2004, 60–63) fall into the longhouse category as well. An intriguing question about this type of dwelling has to do with doorways, whether the spaces communicated internally with one another or only with the outside.

The Minnesota Morea project carried out a survey of domestic architecture in the northwestern Peloponnese. The collected data allow the medieval rural settlement in the mountainous region and its houses to be defined. In villages located on steep slopes below small hilltop fortresses with cisterns and observation towers, freestanding houses followed the slopes in order to create two floor levels, each with its own doorway, within a single long room (Figure 22.4). Livestock occupied the lower compartment and

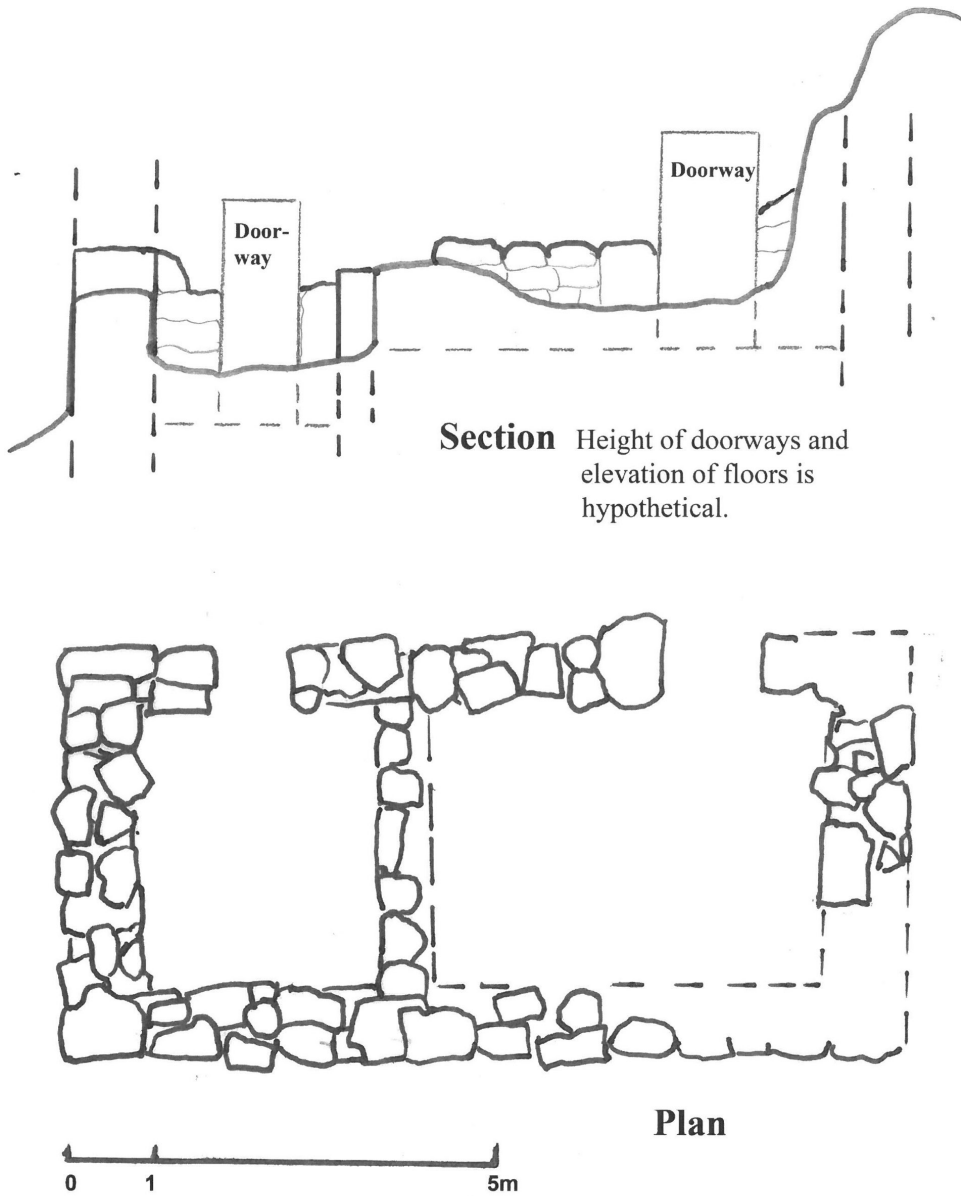


FIGURE 22.4. Plan of medieval house 51 at Santomeri. Kostis Kourelis.

the family the upper one. The construction was of local stone, with ceramic tile roofs. A standard,  $5 \times 5$  m building module was observed, with houses ranging from one module in size to a maximum of six. Small, single-aisle churches were the only public buildings (Kourelis 2005, 121–24).

Houses from rural settlements show regional variations and interesting details. Cisterns for collection of water from house roofs appear at some sites, as do niches in the walls that could have served as cupboards and closets. Some two-story buildings show elements of fortification: narrow slits as the only windows into the ground floor, separate entrances to the stories, and limited communication between stories.

The administrative centers of the Late Byzantine or Frankish period in Greece provide a great deal of information about life in an environment very different from that of the rural village. One of the largest settlements of the time, Mystras in Laconia, was an important center between the mid-thirteenth century and its takeover by the Ottoman Turks in 1460. Although its reconstructed houses dare not be taken at face value as authentic Byzantine monuments (Velenis 1978; Kourelis 2012), they show large and elaborate forms of the longhouse located on a slope. The typical house at Mystras was freestanding and had two stories, occasionally three; the lower story was vaulted, had narrow slits for light, and served as storeroom, stable, and/or cistern. The residents lived in the large room on the upper story, with an unknown number of possessions (Oikonomides 1990), large windows, niches for storage, and possibly even inside toilets. Internal partition walls remain a subject for debate. Frequently the upper story was set back from the lower to create a terrace, from which the residents might enjoy a view of the Spartan plain (Sinos 2009).

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

---

Because it is situated between settlement and family and inextricably connected with both, Byzantine housing offers scholars a choice of directions. Larger Early Byzantine houses would benefit from an examination of access, permeability, and lines of visibility. Identification of activity areas, as seen through artifact assemblages, would be useful for houses of all kinds and periods. The concept of privacy may require redefinition for the one-room Byzantine house where all members of the family apparently carried out all activities. Other than the smell, what was daily life like in one room occupied by people and farm animals? Selective excavation in some of the village houses now known primarily through survey might clarify architecture, economy, village organization, and patterns of daily life.

## REFERENCES

---

- Anderson, B. 2016. "Social Clustering in 5th-c. Constantinople: The Evidence of the Notitia." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 29: 494–508.
- Baldini Lippolis, I. 2001. *La Domus tardoantica: Forme e rappresentazioni dello spazio domestico* (Bologna).

- Bavant, B. 2007. "Caričin Grad and Changes in the Nature of Urbanism in the Central Balkans in the Sixth Century." In *The Transition to Late Antiquity, on the Danube and Beyond*, edited by A. G. Poulter, 337–74 (Oxford).
- Bouras, C. 1982. "Houses in Byzantium." *DChAE* 11: 1–26.
- Bowes, K. 2010. *Houses and Society in the Later Roman Empire* (London).
- Ceylan, B. 2007. "Episkopeia in Asia Minor." In *Housing in Late Antiquity: From Palaces to Shops*, edited by L. Lavan, L. Özgenel, and A. Sarantis, 169–94 (Leiden and Boston).
- Dunn, A. 1997. "Stages in the Transition from the Late Antique to the Middle Byzantine Urban Centre in S. Macedonia and S. Thrace." In *Αφιέρωμα στον Ν.Γ.Λ. Hammond*, 137–51 (Thessaloniki).
- Ellis, S. 1988. "The End of the Roman House." *AJA* 92: 565–76.
- Ellis, S. 2000. *Roman Housing* (London).
- Ellis, S. 2006. "Middle Class Houses in Late Antiquity." In *Housing in Late Antiquity: From Palaces to Shops*, edited by L. Lavan, L. Özgenel, and A. Sarantis, 413–37 (Leiden and Boston).
- Gounaris, G., and G. Velenis, 1996. "Πανεπιστημιακή ανασκαφή Φιλίππων." *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και στη Θράκη* 10B: 719–33.
- Kalas, V. 2006. "The 2004 Survey of the Byzantine Settlement at Selime-Yaprakhisar in the Peristrema Valley, Cappadocia." *DOP* 60: 271–93.
- Karagianni, F. 2012. "The Urban House in Macedonia in Late Antiquity (4th–6th Cent.)." In *Threperia. Studies on Ancient Macedonia*, edited by M. Tiverios, P. Nigdelis, and P. Adam-Veleni, 64–98 (Thessaloniki).
- Kourelis, K. 2005. "The Rural House in the Medieval Peloponnese: An Archaeological Reassessment of Byzantine Domestic Architecture." In *Archaeology in Architecture: Studies in Honor of Cecil L. Striker*, edited by J. J. Emerick, 119–28 (Mainz).
- Kourelis, K. 2011–2012. "Byzantine Houses and Modern Fictions: Domesticating Mystras in 1930s Greece." *DOP* 65/66: 297–331.
- Lavan, L. 2001. "The Praetoria of Civil Governors in Late Antiquity." In *Recent Research in Late Antique Urbanism*, edited by L. Lavan, 39–56 (Portsmouth, RI).
- Magdalino, P. 2001. "Aristocratic Oikoi in the Tenth and Eleventh Regions of Constantinople." In *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography, and Everyday Life*, edited by N. Necipoğlu, 53–69 (Leiden and Boston).
- Mitchell, S. 1996. "The Development of Classical Cities and Settlements in Late Roman Anatolia." In *Housing and Settlement in Anatolia: A Historical Perspective*, edited by Y. Sey, 193–205 (Istanbul).
- Müller-Wiener, W. 1989. "Bischofsresidenzen des 4.–7. Jhs. im östlichen Mittelmeer-raum." In *Actes du XIe Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne 1986*, 651–708 (Rome).
- Oikonomides, N. 1990. "The Contents of the Byzantine House from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century." *DOP* 44: 205–14.
- Ousterhout, R. 2005. *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia*. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 42 (Washington, DC).
- Rheidt, K. 1991. *Altertümer von Pergamon 15. Die Stadtgrabung. Part 2 Die byzantinische Wohnstadt* (Berlin).
- Saliou, C. 2007. "The Byzantine House (400–912): Rules and Representations." In *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400–1453)*, edited by M. Grünbart et. al, 199–206 (Vienna).
- Saradi, H. 1998. "Privatization and Subdivision of Urban Properties in the Early Byzantine Centuries: Social and Cultural Implications." *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 35: 17–43.



- Sigalos, L. 2004. "Middle and Late Byzantine Houses in Greece (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)." In *Secular Buildings and the Archaeology of Everyday Life in the Byzantine Empire*, edited by K. Dark, 53–81 (Oakville, CT).
- Sinos, S. 2009. "Τα Σπίτια του Μυστρά." In *Τα Μνημεία του Μυστρά: Το Έργο της Επιτροπής Αναστήλωσης Μνημείων Μυστρά*, edited by S. Sinos, 243–373 (Athens).
- Skalec, A. 2011–2012. "Private Buildings and Their Juridical Context in the Byzantine Near East." *Revista da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de São Paulo* 106/107: 67–83.
- Velenis, G. 1978. "Wohnviertel und Wohnhausbau in den byzantinischen Städten." *Wohnungsbau im Altertum* 3: 227–36 (Berlin).
- Vionis, A. K. 2014. "The Archaeology of Landscape and Material Culture in Late Byzantine-Frankish Greece." *Pharos* 20: 313–46.
- Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1994. *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton).

## CHAPTER 23

---

# SECULAR ARCHITECTURE: MILITARY

---

STAVROS I. ARVANITOPOULOS

### HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

---

#### Evolution of Fortification Architecture (Third–Fifteenth Century)

As the heir to the Roman Empire after its fall in 476 CE, the Byzantine state inherited a large number of defensive structures (see examples in Müller-Wiener 1961; Foss 1985; Foss and Winfield 1986; Foss 1990; Barnes and Whittow 1993; Pringle 2001; Triposkoufi and Tsitouri, eds. 2002). These included forts located on its borders along the Danube, in Mesopotamia, and the eastern part of North Africa, as well as in the hinterland where ancient cities had been fortified with more modern walls in response to barbarian raids, primarily during the third century and the Early Christian period. Since raids by barbarian tribes were now endemic, Byzantine emperors were constantly engaged in the repair and modernization of city walls within the empire. The most systematic fortification efforts were carried out during the sixth century by Anastasios I and Justinian I. It was during this period that the fundamental features of fortification architecture took shape, remaining unchanged until the end of the empire in the fifteenth century. They provided two major elements: space within the walls to serve as a refuge for residents in the case of danger, from which defense could be continued even after the rest of the city had surrendered; and control of narrow natural passages by fortresses (Evgenidou 1997).

Despite these measures and the huge expense of Justinian's fortification program, it proved impossible to contain the empire's enemies. Accompanying attacks were plagues, famine, and unprecedented turmoil resulting from Iconoclasm (see Brubaker chapter, this volume). With the exception of Constantinople, Thessaloniki, and a handful of other cities, the empire's urban centers had already begun to shrink or were abandoned

by the end of the sixth century, with the trend continuing up through the ninth century. Small agricultural settlements began to appear, along with strategically located fortresses that were often only occupied by their guards and representatives of the state and ecclesiastical authorities. The improvement in conditions during the Macedonian dynasty (ninth–eleventh centuries) allowed for a partial revival of urban centers, although such developments were subordinate to the needs of the capital. The immediacy of the threats to the empire highlighted the need for a network of fortifications in defensively critical locations. Efforts made on a number of fronts by the Komnenian dynasty (eleventh–twelfth century) successfully maintained the power of the state, albeit accompanied by a gradual loss of territory, shrinking revenues, manpower decline, and internal insecurity. Despite this, the period was typified by urban centers of the medieval mold, rather than the fortified agricultural settlements of the earlier era.

This development was brought to an abrupt and violent end by the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 1204. The need to adapt to new conditions, the founding of rival Latin and Byzantine states in the Balkans and Asia Minor, the revival of Byzantium in 1261, and the creation of permanent Slav and Turkish states in the northern Balkans and Asia Minor, respectively, resulted in renewed insecurity. In response, new settlements in naturally defensive locations were established, along with the maintenance and expansion of fortified networks throughout the Late Byzantine period (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries). In addition, social unrest made it necessary to construct new fortifications within the cities and to convert palaces and homes into defensive locations to provide security for officials (Ćurčić and ChadjiTryphonos, eds. 1997).

## Construction and Maintenance Responsibilities

Throughout the Byzantine period, the responsibility for the construction and subsequent maintenance of the majority of fortifications lay with the state. Inscriptions built into the walls frequently memorialize the emperors responsible for this work. Examples include those of Andronikos II Palaiologos (r. Epiros, 1282–1328) on the long wall of Christoupolis, or those of Michael I Angelos Doukas Komnenos (r. 1205–1215) on the fortifications of Iōannina. In some cases the names of senior imperial officials, during whose tenure the fortifications were completed, were also inscribed, for example, Basil Kladon, *stratēgos* of the theme of Strymōn, whose name appears on a marble slab set into the walls of Christoupolis (Kavala). There are also cases in which private individuals or groups, imperial subjects or foreign rulers, undertook the construction and maintenance of public fortifications. These included towers, monastic walls and closes, and even city walls, particularly in the later stages of the empire when the state was financially exhausted. Examples of the latter include repairs carried out along the walls of Constantinople by the Serbian despot George Branković (r. 1429–1456), and the tower built on Mt. Athos by Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin (r. 1282–1321).

The labor for fortification projects was provided on a compulsory basis, at least in the Middle Byzantine period, by the inhabitants of the cities and surrounding areas,

who would in so doing also ensure their own security. In addition to the *kastroktisia* (the obligation to provide labor, though this could be bought off in many cases), private individuals were often obliged to provide the means of transport for construction materials (animals, carts, or boats) and to meet the cost of maintaining the fortifications.

## FORTIFICATION LOCATION

---

The urban centers of the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods were usually founded in close proximity to major roads or in commanding positions over natural routes, such as passes between mountains, access points to ports, or crossroads on provincial and imperial roads. Staging posts were thus created along the Via Egnatia, which often developed into settlements in Macedonia and Thrace, such as Peritheoriōn, Koumoutzēna, and Makrē. The settlements of Plōtinopolis and later Didymoteicho developed along the stretch of the road between Traianoupolis and Hadrianopolis (Evgenidou 1997), while ancient Sardis was founded along the route connecting the coast and the Asia Minor hinterland, in western Turkey (Foss and Scott 2002). Only rarely were naturally fortified positions chosen for older cities. One example is Hadrianopolis, which is bounded by three rivers. But in the majority of cases, cities developed in lowland areas, for example Athens, Thessaloniki, and Edessa, or on hills, as at Kalyva in Thrace and Platamon in Macedonia.

From the seventh century onward, dramatic changes occurred both in the everyday lives of the inhabitants as well as in terms of the structure, strategy, and operation of the Byzantine state. The criteria upon which locations were selected for the founding of new settlements were based on these new conditions. Apart from the requirements of an adequate supply of drinking water and access to key trade routes and ports, these new criteria were shaped primarily by increased insecurity as a result of incursions by barbarian tribes and attacks on vulnerable coastal cities and settlements inland. This led to the revival of certain settlements, either in their original locations or within parts of older cities, as at Marōneia, Sardis (Foss 1976), and Ankara (Foss 1977), or to the development of a number of staging posts along the Via Egnatia into cities, as at Makrē and Mosynopolis in Thrace. Apart from these, most of the fortified cities of the Middle Byzantine period were located on hilltops or hillsides. These included newly founded cities as well as those derived from earlier settlements that were either transferred to an entirely new location, or the remnants of an original settlement area. Examples of the latter include Philippi and Abdēra/Polystylon, where due to population decline the settlement contracted, finally centering on the former acropolis and the ancient port, respectively. Others were located in naturally fortified positions, such as the rocky peninsula at Iōannina or at Arta, surrounded on three sides by the hill of Perranthi and the Arachthos River.

During the Late Byzantine period (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries), lack of security was the predominant feature of everyday life in the empire; it therefore played

a key role in the selection of settlement locations. Fortified positions were now chosen in which access could be fully controlled, as at Mouchli and Geraki in the Peloponnese, or at Glaukē and Xantheia in Thrace. Others were sited in naturally defensive positions, as at Chrysoupolis near Kavala, surrounded by three mountains, lakes, marshes and the sea. On occasion, sites were located in defensive positions at the expense of the fundamental prerequisite of unimpeded water supply, as at Mystras. A further condition governing the development of fortifications of all types (freestanding towers, forts, and fortified cities) was the need to create a secure network to protect key locations and cities that were crucial to the survival of the empire and above all Constantinople. This is particularly the case with fortifications located along the Evros River, in the southern Strymon valley, as well as along the east to west route between Vodena (Edessa) and Lake Prespa. Since insecurity was rife in all of the former provinces of the once-unified Byzantine state, irrespective of ruler, the same criteria for the development of fortifications were applied in the Latin-ruled statelets of Vodonitsa and Salōna in Central Greece.

## FORTIFICATION ARCHITECTURE

---

### Types of Fortification

The fortifications built along the borders of the empire and in its hinterland from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries can be divided into five groups, including:

- Walls for the protection of cities, towns, and villages.
- Forts for the permanent housing of military units and, intermittently, administrative, military, or ecclesiastical representatives of the state. In an emergency, forts also provided shelter for local farmers and could be used to store agricultural produce.
- Barrier walls to protect larger areas, such as the Hexamilion across the Isthmus of Corinth designed to protect the Peloponnese, or the walls at Thermopylae erected for the protection of Central Greece (Bon 1937).
- Freestanding towers with or without a small precinct wall, or towers incorporated as keeps within city walls, forts, and monasteries.
- Walls built around monastic complexes in the countryside and monastic closes in cities.

### Overall Layout

Apart from a number of early square fortifications with corner and mid-wall towers in the form of a Roman camp (such as Koumoutzēna in Thrace and some locations in North Africa), along with irregular trapezoidal (Xantheia) and polygonal (Peritheōrion)

layouts, Byzantine fortifications tended to have irregular floor plans that followed the lay of the land. This enhanced their ability to repel attacks as the height of the underlying bedrock added to the overall height of the walls.

The finest example of Byzantine defensive architecture is to be found at Constantinople. Consisting of five elements, it includes a moat, outer terrace, lower outer wall, inner terrace, and high inner wall. This exceptionally expensive mode of construction was never used again. Only a few other fortifications had moats, with or without water, outside entire circuit walls, usually along sections only of the curtain wall. Examples include Thessaloniki (adjacent to the sections of wall that ran along flat ground) and Iōannina. Equally rare were outer walls, as at mid-Byzantine Polystylon and Didymoteicho from the Palaiologan period. In contrast, acropolises occurred frequently at the highest point in the line of defense, as at Lydian Magnesia (Foss 1979), or independent of it, as at Mystras. Second lines of walls were also common, as at Arta and Trebizond (late phase: Bryer and Winfield 1985). There are also cities with two lines of defenses, yet without an acropolis, as at Sidērokastro near Serres, along with others with one line of walls but two acropolises, as at Verroia and Iōannina. During the Palaiologan era, characterized by insecurity, it was very common for an additional second line of defenses to be added in the form of a keep. Located within the most heavily fortified section, it consisted either of a freestanding tower or one in the line of towers along the walls, but larger and better equipped.

A large number of small forts have survived in North Africa, with at least two stories and rooms arranged around a small courtyard or light well. They date from the Justinianic era or earlier and were built to house the guard or animals, or for storing agricultural produce from the local area (Diehl 1896).

## Construction and Morphology

A fortified zone consisted primarily of towers linked by straight sections of curtain wall. The latter were often constructed in an elaborate manner with a core of rubble and mortar, faced on both sides using the sophisticated Late Roman *opus mixtum* method of alternating bands of stone and brick. The core and outer faces were connected by transverse bricks or stones spanning the width of the wall. This method was used during the Early Byzantine to build the walls at Marōneia, during the Middle Byzantine at Petropigi and Anaktoropolis in Macedonia and Kosmosōteira in Thrace, as well as during the Late Byzantine at Berati, Gynaikokastro and Peritheōrion (Figure 23.1).

The *cloisonné* method was used more rarely, as at Smederevo and Topeiros, as were less elaborate forms such as rubblework with brick and tile fragments, either scattered as at Livadia, or set in rows that were usually short, as at Drama. In many cases the façades of the walls included reused carvings or architectural elements from structures dating from antiquity or earlier Byzantine periods, as at Thessaloniki (city walls and Heptapyrgion) and at Sardis (see Kiilerich chapter, this volume). Others contained patterned brickwork, as at Servia and Sidērokastro; blind niches, as at Thessaloniki



FIGURE 23.1. Walls with *opus mixtum* technique, Peritheōrion. © Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos.

(Heptapyrgion); brickwork monograms, as at Didymoteicho; or inscriptions, as at Aggelokastro in Aitōlia and Iōannina.

The *peridromos* used by defending troops was generally constructed above a series of arches built on the inside of the curtain wall or, more rarely, upon a solid wall or a shelf-like projection supported on wooden brackets. The stone steps leading up to the wall-walk were built parallel and adjacent to the wall and were arranged singly as at Nikopolis and Mytilēnē, or in double flights that ran in opposite directions and met on a shared landing, as at Drama.

For security reasons, the gates and posterns of fortresses and cities opened into the ground floor of a tower or between two towers. Many of the later entrances had machicolations projecting above them. Gates were the most vulnerable points in the line of defense and were therefore kept to a minimum, their number depending on the population living within the walls. Beroea had at least four gates in its walls, while Didymoteicho had five and Thessaloniki had at least six along with three posterns. With the exception of Mystras, which had fourteen gates, during the Middle to Late Byzantine eras most cities only had one, as at Dragamestos and Geraki, or two, as at Drama and Gynaikokastro, although Berati had one gate and three posterns. Gatehouses were positioned on the outside of the wall (or tower), thus funneling attackers into narrow passages through which they could only pass one or two at a time, making them vulnerable to counterattack by

the defenders. There were also gates that included two consecutive doors, as at Thevestē in modern Algeria and Mystras (Figure 23.2), with the gates of Anapli (Nauplion) and Monovasia (Monemvasia), one of which was a portcullis.

There was no fixed plan for towers, and their form was not indicative of the period in which they were built, given that most types remained in use from the Early Christian to Palaiologan periods. Different fortifications from the same period or belonging to the same complex can feature towers that were triangular (Thessaloniki), square (Kitros and Moglena), rectangular (Makrē and Sidērokastrō), pentagonal (Didymoteicho), polygonal (Anaktoropolis), or circular (Koumoutzēna, Bagai in modern Algeria, and Theleptē in modern Tunisia). One, two, and on rare occasions three stories were constructed above the ground floor, covered by a flat wooden roof or dome (saucer-dome, barrel vault, or cross-vault). The upper stories were reached by means of internal steps made of wood or rarely of stone built into the wall (Heptapyrgion at Thessaloniki). In other cases the upper stories were accessed directly from the peridromos, as at sites in North Africa.

Freestanding towers were similarly diverse, with a significant number having survived in central Macedonia, particularly in Chalcidicē. As a rule, they were high and included two (Marmarion and Daphnē-Ezebai) or three stories (Apollōnia and Vrasna), sometimes more. Examples of the latter include the southern tower at Sidērokausia, which had at least four floors, while Galatista had five, Mariana had six, and Milutin's Tower had seven. The interior layout of the freestanding towers did not differ from the wall towers, and the method of construction for both types mirrored that of the curtain wall.



FIGURE 23.2. Anapli Gate, Mystras, view from the northwest. © Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos.



The most vulnerable point of the freestanding towers were their external gates; these opened a number of meters above ground level, two at Marmarion and four at Kolitsou. Entry was by means of a wooden ladder, which could be pulled up in case of danger. Stone steps were also used, built parallel to the façade of the tower but not abutting it. The gap between the top step and the gate was spanned by a movable wooden bridge that, like the wooden ladder, could be withdrawn inside the building, as at Nea Monē on Chios. At the entrance level of the tower, usually the first floor, a staircase led to the upper stories. These were often made of stone and were straight or circular (Mariana, Kolitsou, and Milutin's Tower), either built into the wall or attached to it. In some cases the stairs were made of wood, as at Kolitsou and Mariana. If the entrance to the tower was at ground level (Daphne-Ezebai), there was no communication between this area and the upper stories, which had their own separate entrance. Towers also had a limited number of small openings (arched posterns) at lower levels, along with larger windows and doorways opening onto wooden or stone platforms higher up. Machicolations were often constructed above gates and sensitive points on the sides of towers, as at Karakallou on Mt. Athos (Figure 23.3).

Towers also included cisterns, built underground if possible or on the ground floor when the entrance was positioned higher up, to collect vital water from the roof via pipes built into the walls. The upper levels, which were often equipped with fireplaces and areas for ablutions, served as the residence of the commander and the guard or the landowner, depending on the tower's function. The uppermost floor often housed a chapel, as at Gynaikokastro and Galatista.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

---

Examination of secular Byzantine architecture is a relatively recent phenomenon. There are many reasons for this, including the smaller numbers of buildings that have survived and are available for study, in contrast to ecclesiastical ones. This lack of emphasis has resulted in much of the material record being neglected or destroyed through recent urban and rural expansion, unfortunately with very little documentation. There are relatively few detailed studies of secular complexes, while most are more general works as is apparent in some of their titles: "A Skeletal History" by A. W. Lawrence (1983) or "... An Introduction" by C. Foss and D. Winfield (1986). The situation is now changing and with this in mind, future research needs to set itself the following core goals:

Excavation of defensive complexes (whatever their state of preservation) to clarify their function on the basis of structures within their walls and immediate vicinity. With few exceptions, the focus until now has been on preserving sites and researching their visible remains, which can skew the conclusions drawn.

Development of synthetic works focusing on each of the empire's main geographic zones (the Balkans, Asia Minor, the Near East, Italy, and North Africa). Only parts



FIGURE 23.3. Tower of Karakallou monastery, Mt. Athos. © Stavros I. Arvanitopoulos.

of Greece and western North Africa have been studied to any extent, mainly focusing on the sixth–seventh centuries. The absence of such work limits the potential for comparison between regions that differed significantly in terms of climate, ethnology, and history. It also makes it difficult to date remains or to identify shared features in the defensive architecture of the peoples who settled in Byzantine territories: Arabs, Crusaders, and groups from the Balkans.

Creation of reliable maps plotting defensive works from different periods. These, in combination with the limited written sources, could then be used to explore potential links between neighboring fortifications and their inclusion or otherwise within larger networks. They would also help reveal whether fortifications were built according to a centralized plan or were designed ad hoc. Such maps would

also allow for links or otherwise to be investigated between private and state sponsored fortifications, in particular during the Middle and Late Byzantine in Macedonia, or during the period of Latin rule in Attica, Boeotia, and Euboea.

From now on, research must deal with fortifications in a manner similar to that applied in the study of ecclesiastical complexes, for which we have a much richer body of literature, dealing with issues related to their construction, typology, morphology, and function. This literature goes a long way toward allowing researchers to date, compare, and understand the evolution of ecclesiastical architecture through time. In contrast, the information that could be provided by the study of Byzantine defensive architecture remains essentially unexploited, making it harder to understand life in the empire, in which conflict and war were an everyday reality for all who lived within its borders.

## REFERENCES

- Barnes, H., and M. Whittow. 1993. "The Oxford University/British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Survey of Medieval Castles of Anatolia (1992). Mastaura Kalesi: A Preliminary Report." *Anatolian Studies* 43: 117–35.
- Bon, A. 1937. "Les forteresses médiévales de la Grèce centrale." *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 61: 136–208.
- Bryer, A. A. M., and D. C. Winfield. 1985. *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* 1–2. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 20 (Washington, DC).
- Ćurčić, S., and E. Chadjityrphonos, eds. 1997. *Κοσμική αρχιτεκτονική στα Βαλκάνια 1300–1500 και η διατήρησή της* (Thessaloniki).
- Diehl, C. 1896. *L'Afrique Byzantine* (Paris).
- Evgenidou, D. 1997. *Κάστρα Μακεδονίας και Θράκης: Βυζαντινή Καστροκτισία* (Athens).
- Foss, C. 1976. *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis* (Cambridge, MA).
- Foss, C. 1977. "Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara." *DOP* 31: 27–88.
- Foss, C. 1979. "Late Byzantine Fortifications in Lydia." *JÖB* 28: 297–320.
- Foss, C. 1985. *Survey of Medieval Castles in Anatolia. I. Kütahya*. BAR International Series 261 (Oxford).
- Foss, C. 1990. "Byzantine Malagina and the Lower Sangarius." *Anatolian Studies* 40: 161–83.
- Foss, C., and J. A. Scott. 2002. "Sardis." In *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, edited by A. E. Laiou, 615–22. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 39 (Washington, DC).
- Foss, C., and D. Winfield. 1986. *Byzantine Fortifications: An Introduction* (Pretoria).
- Lawrence, A. W. 1983. "A Skeletal History of Byzantine Fortification." *Annual of the British School at Athens* 78: 171–227.
- Müller-Wiener, W. 1961. "Mittelalterliche Befestigungen im südlichen Jonien." *IstMitt* 11: 5–122.
- Pringle, D. 2001. *The Defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab Conquest: An Account of the Military History and Archaeology of the African Provinces in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*. BAR International Series 99 (Oxford).
- Tripeskoufi, A., and A. Tsitouri, eds. 2002. *Venetians and Knights Hospitallers. Military Architecture Networks—Archi-med Pilot Action* (Athens).

## CHAPTER 24

---

# ACCEPTANCE AND ADAPTATION OF BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURAL TYPES IN THE “BYZANTINE COMMONWEALTH”

---

MARK J. JOHNSON

### INTRODUCTION

---

THE influence of Byzantine architecture on that of neighboring lands was tremendous, particularly in the design of church buildings that served the Orthodox branch of Christianity. As Christianity spread into the Balkans and beyond, the architectural types developed for Christian worship in Constantinople followed. The adoption of these types was often followed by adaptation, as patrons and builders in various regions inserted their own ideas and aesthetic choices into their Byzantine models (Ousterhout, 2019, 507–57, 649–76). While much less remains of secular architecture in Byzantium and its Commonwealth neighbors, the impact of Constantinople and its palaces and other monuments on similar buildings in these places was also significant, as rulers sought to emulate features of the imperial capital in their own building projects.

In providing an overview of this influence, the present contribution will be restricted in two ways. First, the buildings under consideration will be limited to those of the medieval period, from the sixth to the fifteenth century. Second, only buildings in lands not under Byzantine rule at the time of their construction will be considered. These lands include Bulgaria, medieval Rus' (modern Ukraine and Russia), the Veneto region and the Norman Kingdom in Italy, and medieval Serbia (modern Serbia, Kosovo, and parts of the Republic of North Macedonia).

As the Christian imperial capital and heir to the Roman Empire, Constantinople exuded a strong influence and its place as role model for lesser capitals and their rulers was unparalleled. This impact was already visible in around 500 as the Ostrogothic ruler of Italy, Theoderic, sought to model his own court on that of Constantinople and his own palace in Ravenna on the Great Palace in that city (Johnson 2016, 363–70). Other than the church now known as Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, nothing remains standing of Theoderic's palace, but evidence provides a picture of a complex similar in layout to its model, overlooking the sea on the east and connected to a hippodrome (circus) and open square on the west displaying equestrian statues of their respective rulers. Several buildings of the palace in Ravenna bore the same names as their model: there was an Excubitorium to house the palace guards, an entry gate called the Chalkē, and a palace chapel dedicated to Christ.

Three centuries later another Western ruler, Charlemagne, built a palace at Aachen. Its remaining standing building is the Palatine Chapel, dedicated in 805. This centrally planned building with an octagonal core defined by eight piers supporting a vaulted covering is often likened to the Byzantine church of San Vitale in Ravenna, with which it shares several parallels (Bandmann 2005, 194–201). There may have been another model to influence its design as well—the Chrysotriklinos in the Great Palace, built during the reign of Justin II (565–78) (Westbrook 2013, 129–43). The two buildings were very similar, with that in Constantinople having an octagonal plan, with eight piers supporting eight arches that in turn held a drum with sixteen windows and a dome. Though it functioned as a reception and ceremonial hall, it contained a chapel holding relics, blurring the traditional distinction between religious and secular architecture.

It is in the realm of ecclesiastical architecture that Byzantine influence was the greatest. The differences between Western medieval and Byzantine church design are rooted in developments in architecture during the sixth century and, in particular, during the reign of Justinian (527–565); his term saw the insertion of a dome, and therefore a vertical axis, into the traditional horizontal emphasis of the basilica type. The domed basilica, best represented by the emperor's Hagia Sophia in the capital, illustrates the idea and provided a model that was copied in various places throughout the empire.

In the west, the traditional basilica, first adopted by Christians for the design of their places of worship in the fourth century, would continue to be the most common type in the sixth century and throughout the Middle Ages, with some modifications. In Byzantium, the further development of church types frequently included a dome, or multiple domes, as key elements in their designs, but were also most often small and compact buildings. The most common medieval Byzantine church design, known as the cross-in-square type, may have appeared as early as the eighth or ninth century but became common in the tenth and following centuries. In this type there is a square space with four columns or piers dividing it into nine compartments. The central one is covered by a dome, the cross axes by barrel vaults and the corner spaces by cross vaults, or sometimes small domes. A tripartite sanctuary is placed on the east side of

the square and a rectangular narthex on the west. These are generally small compact structures with a notable vertical axis created by a tall space and tall drum under the central dome. Many of these features remained in the later variations of church design in Byzantium.

The ecclesiastical architecture of the lands surrounding the Byzantine Empire adopted many of these types and their variations. These were, at times, combined with local types or details as they were adapted to local taste and preferences. Variations on the domed basilica theme came to be part of the design of churches in Georgia and Armenia, for example, as they developed their own distinctive church types (see Skhirtladze and Maranci chapters, this volume). The dependence of church designs in the lands under consideration here on their Byzantine prototypes is obvious.

## BULGARIA

---

As a territory bordering the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria throughout the Middle Ages was at times part of the empire, at times independent, but always strongly in its sphere of influence (see chapter by Milanović, this volume). During the ninth century, Pliska served as the capital of the independent Bulgarian state. There a palace, modeled in part on the Great Palace in Constantinople, was built in the years between 814 and 831 (Ćurčić 2010, 284). In 864, the ruler of Bulgaria, Khan Boris, converted to Christianity and sent his son Symeon to Constantinople to be educated during the 870s and 880s. At some point, either the father or the son added a church to the palace complex. This was a small cross-in-square church, measuring only  $8.5 \times 13$  m with a single apse on its eastern side, being, perhaps, the first of its type in Bulgaria.

In 893, Symeon decided to abandon Pliska and built a new palace complex, set within a walled complex at Preslav. A short distance outside of the wall, he constructed an unusual building, known today as the Round Church, but called by a medieval Bulgarian text the “Golden Church,” which was dedicated in 907 (Ćurčić 2010, 288–90). Constructed on a terrace, the circular outer wall of the church is about 15.5 m in diameter. Inside numerous niches decorated the outer wall, facing an ambulatory. In the center were twelve freestanding columns that supported the drum and covering of the central space. Although it could be argued that the sources for this design were to be found in similar double-shell churches from Late Antiquity, this, too, was inspired by models that Symeon would have seen in Constantinople. These included the Chrysotriklinos mentioned earlier, but also what was then a newly built centralized church dedicated to the Prophet Elijah, also in the Great Palace complex, by the emperor Basil I (r. 867–886). Its appellation as the “Golden Church” suggests an interior decoration of mosaics with gold backgrounds.

Following a period of Byzantine occupation, a Second Bulgarian Empire was established in 1185. A new capital was built in Turnovo, a city overlooking a river valley. Part

of the new construction involved building a palace and a complex for the Patriarch, located just outside of the palace walls (Ćurčić 2010, 476–77). The Patriarchate church was a cross-in-square building with four piers in the naos, a tripartite sanctuary and two narthexes, largely following Byzantine models. Dedicated to the Ascension of Christ, the church is referred to in medieval sources as the “mother church of the Bulgarian Empire.” Notwithstanding its importance, it was a relatively small building, measuring only 13 × 23 m. It, in turn, served as a model for other Bulgarian churches of the same type.

Later churches in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Bulgaria include a church type that had a basilica form with traditional Middle Byzantine features, as seen in churches at Mesembria (Nessebur), on the coast of the Black Sea and elsewhere. Set in a dramatic location on the side of a mountain, the church of the Mother of God of Petrichka, at Asenova Krepost, illustrates the development (Figure 24.1) (Ćurčić 2010, 480–82). It is a single-naved church with a rectangular narthex with a bell tower above, an oblong naos with a square central bay covered by a dome, and a tripartite sanctuary at its eastern end and a dome over the center of the nave. The two-storied building shows direct Constantinopolitan influences in its construction and decorative architectural details.



FIGURE 24.1. Church of the Mother of God of Petrichka, at Asenova Krepost, thirteenth century, exterior from southwest. Photo: Mikhal Orel/Wikimedia Commons.

## SERBIA

Having been part of the Byzantine Empire off and on through several centuries, the influence of Byzantine architecture and art was strong in medieval Serbia (see Milanović chapter, this volume). A distinctively Serbian form of ecclesiastical architecture emerged during the reign of the Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja, who ruled from 1166 to 1196.

His church of St. George in the monastery of Djurdjevi Stupovi (Pillars of St. George), near Novi Pazar, built after 1166 but completed by 1171, represents the emergence of a new hybrid of church architecture meshing Byzantine and Western Romanesque characteristics (Ćurčić 2010, 493–94). Limited space in the monastery led to the design of a small church only 16 × 9.5 m wide. Constructed in limestone using Western techniques, the church has a narthex flanked by square towers, a domed naos without side aisles, porches on the north and south, and a tripartite sanctuary on the east.

This church served as the prototype for several Serbian churches, especially after it was adopted in the church in Nemanja's most important foundation, the monastery of Studenica, built in an isolated location (Figure 24.2) (Ćirković, Korać, and Babić 1986; Ćurčić 2010, 494–98). The complex was begun as early as 1183. In plan, the original entrance led into a rectangular space intended to be the burial place of Nemanja that also acts as an extension of the next space, a square naos covered by a dome. Porches extend out on the north and south and a tripartite sanctuary occupies the eastern end.

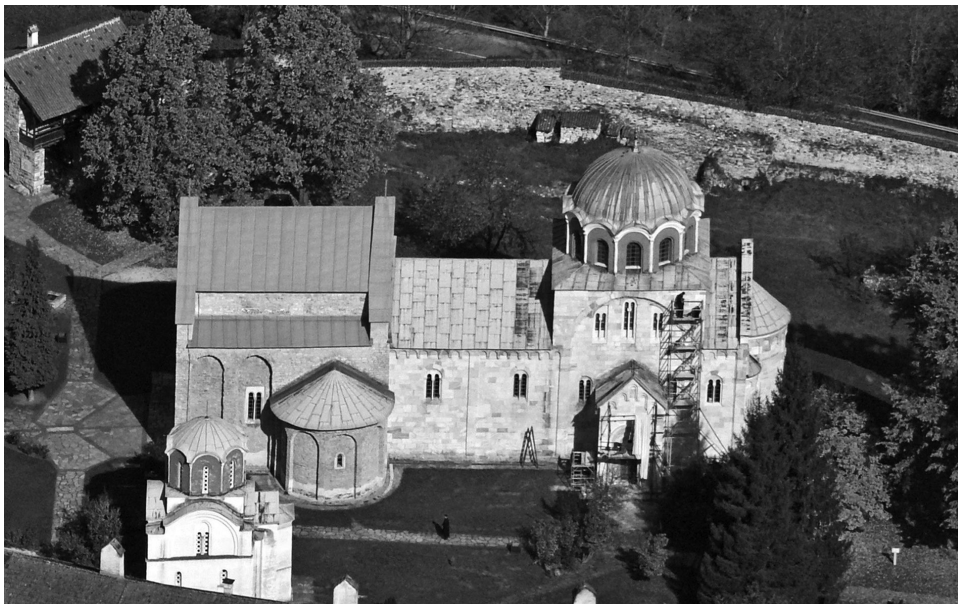


FIGURE 24.2. Church of the Virgin, Studenica, completed by 1207, aerial view from south. Photo: Dušan Slijivić, used by permission.



The church is built of a high-quality white marble articulated with numerous Romanesque details—pilaster strips, corbel-table friezes, and carved decoration on the window jambs, all of which was the work of unknown Western masters. Inside the interior presents a tall space with the central dome rising some 19 m above the floor. The form of the sanctuary and the presence of a central dome show Byzantine influence. The dome, which sits on a polygonal drum and measures 6.5 m in diameter, is constructed of brick and its inner face is scalloped, as seen in Constantinopolitan domes of this period. Also showing Byzantine influence is the interior decoration of frescoes, with an inscription dating their completion to 1208/1209.

Architecture in Serbia in the fourteenth century was more directly connected with Byzantine prototypes. This is seen in the Church of the Annunciation, later the Dormition at Gračanica, Kosovo, in historic Serbia, built by King Milutin and completed by 1321 (Ćurčić 2010, 664–66). It is a building of the ambulatory church type that is very close in design to the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki. The core is like a cross-in-square church, having a square naos with four piers. These are very tall, with a central dome resting high above the floor. A tripartite sanctuary is on the east and the “ambulatory,” the side aisles and narthex, envelop the core on the north, west, and south sides, communicating with the naos through doorways rather than colonnades. Four smaller domes are placed in the corners of the building and the verticality of the building is emphasized by the use of layered arches.

The cross-in-square type continued to be used into the fourteenth century, as seen in the church of St. Demetrius in the Markov Monastery at Sušica, near Skopje, in the Republic of North Macedonia, which was begun in 1341 and finished after 1371 (Ćurčić 2010, 640–43). The church is constructed of brick and stone, with pilaster strips on its exterior reflecting the structure of the interior. Inside four tall octagonal piers rise to support the octagonal drum and its dome. A tripartite sanctuary with small niches rather than apses in the side chapels extends across the eastern side of the building. The wall separating the naos from the narthex has been eliminated and replaced with two piers defining the boundary between the spaces. The trend toward ever-increasing verticality seen elsewhere is on display here as well.

## MEDIEVAL RUS' (MODERN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA)

---

The baptism of Prince Vladimir of Kiev (r. 978–1015) in 988 led to the conversion of his people to Christianity and the building of churches following Byzantine models. Within a year of his baptism, Vladimir initiated construction on what would be the first stone and brick building in Russia, a church dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin also known as the Desyatinnaya, or Church of the Tithes, as the prince dedicated a tenth

of his income to its construction and upkeep (Voronin 1957a, 70–72; Mango 1976, 324; Hamilton 1983, 21–23). Consecrated in 996, it was destroyed in the Tartar invasion of 1240 and is known only from the excavations of its foundations in 1926 and from brief mentions in literary sources.

With no prior experience in church building or in the use of these materials and building techniques, Vladimir imported artisans from Byzantium to undertake the work. The church consisted of a cross-in-square with a central dome on a fenestrated drum some 6 m in diameter, a tripartite sanctuary on the east, and a narthex on the west. It had marble columns, carved capitals, tessellated pavements, and fresco decoration.

It was Vladimir's son and successor, Jaroslav the Wise, ruler from 1016 to 1054, who engaged on a building campaign intended to make Kiev a worthy capital with parallels to Constantinople. His projects included a city entrance called the Golden Gate, like the one in the Byzantine capital, and a new cathedral that shared both its dedication, St. Sophia, or Holy Wisdom, as well as its position relative to its palace with those of the cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Mango 1976, 324–28; Voronin 1957a, 77; Hamilton 1983, 23–28; Brumfield 1993, 12–4).

Apparently begun as early as in ca. 1017, or as more commonly believed, in 1037, the new church was consecrated in 1061. Various additions, partial destructions, and rebuilding as well as later remodeling have made it difficult to ascertain the exact form of the original building. The best guess is that it was laid out as an expanded version of the cross-in-square type with a central nave flanked on each side with two side aisles, each possessing an apse at its east end with an overall exterior measurement of about 37 × 55 m. All of the supports of the church's interior are cruciform piers separated by tall arched openings that have the effect of creating a series of compartments, while emphasizing the verticality of the building. The central space of the nave is covered by a dome about 7.7 m in diameter that rises to a height of almost 30 m. In addition to the central dome there were also twelve additional smaller domes above the other compartments, for a total of thirteen, though there is some thought that these were later additions and the original building had a single dome. These are arranged in a pyramidal fashion, lower on the outside compartments, rising in height with the middle ones, and that of the center forming the apex.

Byzantine builders and artisans were at work here, too. Exposed portions of the masonry show the use of stone and brick set in the recessed-brick technique, then also in use in Constantinople, and mosaicists were brought in to decorate the interior in the typical Byzantine manner with a Christ Pantokrator in the dome and the Virgin Mary depicted in the conch of the apse.

Jaroslav's brother, Mstislav of Tmutarakan, prince of Chernigov, founded a cathedral for his city in ca. 1017; dedicated to the Transfiguration, it was completed in ca. 1036 (Voronin 1957a, 73–77; Hamilton 1983, 31–32; Brumfield 1993, 14–15). The plan of the church is a cross-in-square, elongated somewhat to the east by two additional supports to create more space in front of the main apse to serve as sanctuary. Constructed of stone and thin bricks, it has a narthex on the west and three apses on the east. It has five domes

with the central one rising to a height of about 27.5 m, higher and larger than the remaining four, which are placed over the corners of the buildings. The compartments of the cross axes are taller than those of the corners and end externally with a *zakomara* (or curved gable).

Jaroslav's son Vladimir, prince of Novgorod, commissioned a new cathedral for his city in 1045, replacing an earlier wooden church (Hamilton 1983, 39–42; Brumfield 1993, 27–28). Like the one in Kiev, it was dedicated to St. Sophia, but its design was much closer to that of the cathedral at Chernigov. Laid out as a cross-in-square with an extended eastern section and two additional piers, it was wider with additional side aisles, but has only three apses. It has five domes arranged like those at Chernigov, covered with some of the earliest onion domes found in Russian architecture. Built of brick and local limestone, it is relatively small at roughly 15 × 35 m, but about as tall as the church in Kiev, giving it a strong sense of verticality. The exterior wall is articulated with pilaster strips of a kind found in Western medieval architecture.

The adaption of Byzantine prototypes to a more uniquely Russian aesthetic became more pronounced in the twelfth century and afterward. This is seen in the small but celebrated Church of the Pokrov Bogoroditzy (Intercession of the Virgin), constructed on an artificial terrace next to the Nerl River outside of Vladimir by Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii in 1166 (Voronin 1957b, 222–24; Hamilton 1983, 56–58; Brumfield 1993, 48–51). In plan it is a simple cross-in-square with a single dome supported on four cross-shaped piers, with three apses on the east but no narthex, though originally it had an external gallery on the west. In contrast to earlier Byzantine churches of this plan, the cubical form of the church has been raised considerably, creating proportionally tall interior spaces, with the whole surmounted by a very tall drum holding what was originally a hemispherical dome.

A contemporary account reports that Prince Andrei brought craftsmen “from every land” and it is in their work that additional divergences from the Byzantine model are seen. The church is built entirely of white limestone with no brick and its exterior is articulated with a blind arcade of small slender columns resting on corbels, a Romanesque touch that is also seen in the pilaster strips decorating the drum. Each of the three bays of the north, west, and south façades is topped by *zakomary* in the manner seen at the cathedral of Chernigov, but containing carved relief decoration of a type rarely found in Byzantine church decoration.

These features are also seen in church architecture as late as the fifteenth century. The church of the Andronikov Monastery in Moscow, built in 1425–1427, retains the small and simple cross-in-square plan with four piers and three apses but no narthex (Figure 24.3) (Mango 1976, 336). It follows the Russian adaptation of the type, with its heightened verticality emphasized externally by a series of rising rows of superimposed arched gables, known as *kokoshniki*, that connect it with both its predecessors but also with the further development of Russian church architecture in the following centuries.



FIGURE 24.3. Andronikov Monastery, church, Moscow, 1425–1427, exterior from southeast. Photo: Mark J. Johnson.

## THE VENETO, ITALY

---

Venice and its surrounding territory were briefly part of the Byzantine Empire during the sixth century. In the following centuries, strong ties were developed by way of trade, with Venetian merchants living in a number of Byzantine cities and especially in

Constantinople. This familiarity with the capital and its buildings led to one of the more important examples of appropriation of a Byzantine prototype for the design of a church in Venice. In 828, the relics of St. Mark were smuggled out of Alexandria and brought to Venice. A new church was planned by Doge Justinian Partecipacius, to be built on property he owned; instructions for its construction were left in his will and it was completed by his brother in 832 (Demus 1960, 9–12, 64–69; Richardson 1997; Cecchi 2003, 19–20). The model for the church was the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, as rebuilt by the emperor Justinian in the sixth century (see Georgopoulou chapter, this volume).

Justinian's church was cruciform in plan, with five domes—one over the crossing and one over each of the cross arms (Krautheimer 1986, 241–44). The church built by the doge Partecipacius was later replaced and there is some debate as to its original size and form, but the general consensus today is that it, too, was a cruciform structure with at least one dome. The present building, dating to the eleventh century, incorporated some of the foundations and rising walls of the earlier church, which therefore remained close in form and size to the earlier structure. Although there seem to have been a number of late fourth- and early fifth-century copies of the first Holy Apostles church built by Constantius II, this appears to be the first copy of the Justinianic building (Papacostas 2010).

In 1063, the doge Giovanni Contarini decided to rebuild the church, then more than two centuries old (Demus 1960, 12, 70–105; Krautheimer 1986, 406–11). A chronicle written shortly after the event reports on his patronage and notes that it was “built similar to the church dedicated to the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople” (Demus 1960, 13). Completed under the later doge Vitale Falier, the present church was consecrated in either 1084/85 or 1093/94.

Like Justinian's Holy Apostles church, San Marco is a cruciform building with five domes that rest on drums with windows (Figure 24.4). The arms of San Marco are of unequal sizes; the domes of the crossing and the west arm are larger at about 13 m in diameter, while the other three domes vary in diameter between about 10 and 11 m. Short barrel vaults cover the spaces between the domes. It has been suggested that the architect was brought in from Constantinople, but that the building crew was local (Demus 1960, 99–100). The building is constructed in brick, using the Western building technique of thick bricks set in thin beds of mortar. Later additions have changed the original exterior appearance, as work continued on decorating the building into the fifteenth century.

Also similar to its predecessor, the interior domes and vaults of the church are covered with gold mosaic. These date to various periods, but the appearance of the completed decoration with mosaic, marble revetment, and tessellated floors echoed that of the finest contemporary churches in Byzantium.

Other Byzantine influences are noticeable in the region, in particular in the design of the church of Santa Fosca on the island of Torcello (Krautheimer 1986, 405–6). First mentioned in a document of 1012, it is a variation of the cross-dome octagon type common in the eleventh century in Byzantium. Its dome over the naos, 9.68 m in



FIGURE 24.4. San Marco, Venice, begun 1063, interior view of nave to apse. Photo: Mark J. Johnson.

diameter, has collapsed save for the bottom few courses, but the building retains a character of compactness and height that matches its models. Further influence from the East is seen in the treatment of the decorative details of the apse, with two tiers of niches and decorative brickwork similar to eleventh- and twelfth-century exterior church decoration in Constantinople.

## NORMAN ITALY

The southern Italian provinces of Sicily, Calabria, Basilicata, and Apulia were at times part of the Byzantine Empire from the sixth century on. The Normans arrived in this region early in the eleventh century, eventually establishing a duchy in Apulia by 1059 and then conquering Calabria and Sicily, which itself had fallen under Arab control in the course of the ninth and tenth centuries, by 1091. Count Roger I ruled Calabria and Sicily until his death in 1101; his son and successor, Roger II, consolidated all of the Norman territories under his rule and was eventually crowned king in 1130.

The architectural legacy of the Byzantine period is seen in several small cross-in-square churches in Calabria and Apulia that appear to date to the tenth century. Count Roger initiated a building program in his territories that included the construction and

support of monasteries housing Basilian (Orthodox) monks in Calabria. Following the completion of the conquest of Sicily, he undertook the re-Christianization of the island by building new cathedrals and, again, Basilian monasteries.

The churches built in these monasteries represent a hybrid of Byzantine and Western architectural concepts (Nicklies 2004). They are generally small basilicas, some single-naved, to which a dome is added, not in the middle of the nave as seen in earlier domed basilicas, but placed directly in front of the apse covering the bema, or altar and sanctuary, of the church. Small side chapels flank the sanctuary, creating the standard tripartite sanctuary of Orthodox churches.

The “domed bema” type may be represented by the church of San Giovanni at Bivongi in Calabria (Bozzoni and Curuni 2003). Built late in the eleventh or early in the twelfth century, it stood in ruins for centuries until being renovated recently and placed back in use as a monastery church, today serving Orthodox monks from Mt. Athos. The aisleless nave is long and narrow with a timber roof. The east end is wider with short transept arms that open into chapels on their eastern walls and a tall, tower-like space rising above the sanctuary and covered with a small hemispherical dome. Similar churches are found at Staiti and, on a smaller scale, at Santa Severina in Calabria and Mili San Pietro in Sicily, with slightly larger, aisled churches at Italà and Forza d’Agrò in eastern Sicily.

The cross-in-square type continued to be used in Norman Italy, with the most famous example being the church of Santa Maria dell’Ammiraglio, also known as the Martorana, in Palermo (Ćurčić and Kitzinger 1990; Bergman, 1991). Built by George of Antioch, a high official in the court of King Roger, as his funerary chapel, it was dedicated in 1143. It employs a simple plan with a square measuring  $12.5 \times 12.5$  m containing four reused columns holding a central dome, three apses on the east, and a narthex, apparently added in a second moment, on the west. The church was given an atrium and, on the west side, a single but elaborately designed campanile tower.

The exterior of this church has been obscured by later additions, but the characteristic cubical form of the main part of the church is still visible. It is divided into three bays, each with a small lancet window framed by a series of inset arches. Built of local limestone rather than brick, it is also unlike standard Byzantine churches of the type in that the cross arms are not raised higher than the corner compartments. Instead, the top of the exterior wall is marked by a short horizontal parapet containing a dedicatory inscription carved in stone.

All of the spaces inside are vaulted—barrel vaults over the cross arms and cross-vaults over the corner compartments. A tall drum raises the dome, set on squinches. Though the concept of the architecture is Byzantine, the material, the pointed arches, and the exact form of the vaults show that the builders were local artisans. The interior retains most of its original mosaic decoration in the vaults and dome over the interior spaces; the lower walls have marble revetment, and the floor is tessellated with multicolored stones in patterns reflecting Byzantine floors.

The architectural type of the Martorana church is perhaps more easily seen in its contemporary, the church of the SS. Trinità di Delia, near Castelvetro (Figure 24.5) (Di Stefano 1979, 58-9). Though its origins are obscure due to the lack of surviving



FIGURE 24.5. SS. Trinità, Delia, near Castelvetro, ca. 1150, exterior from southeast. Photo: Mark J. Johnson.

documentation, the building is so close to the Martorana in many respects that it must date to about the same period and was likely part of a monastery. Somewhat smaller than the Martorana, it shares its simple plan of a square with three apses on the east and doors on the west and near the west ends of the north and south sides. It has no narthex. Constructed of a local limestone, the exterior is articulated with clear geometric forms. Here the cross arms are taller than the corner compartments, resulting in an exterior wall of three bays, with the central one being taller. A single lancet window opens in each section, framed in the Norman manner by concentric arches done in raised masonry with the molding of the outer arch continuing horizontally at the bottom to connect with its neighbors, even wrapping around the corners to continue to the arches of the openings on the west and on the apses on the east. A raised string course runs along the top of each wall section and vertically along the edges of the center bay. The hemispherical dome sits on a raised square block, which has a single small window in each side.

Inside, four reused columns and capitals support stilts elevating arches to create a taller interior space. These, in turn, support the drum, which has squinches with distinctive arches built with projecting edges in the Norman manner. Barrel vaults cover the cross arms and cross-vaults cover the corner compartments, as often seen in Byzantine counterparts. The apses are flanked by small niches containing columns, another common decorative feature in Norman architecture in Sicily. Nothing remains of any possible original decoration.



Roger II brought back the domed bema type in the design of his Cappella Palatina, the chapel of his primary palace in Palermo, consecrated in 1140 (Tronzo 1997; Brenk 2010; Dittelbach 2011). Laid out as a basilica with nave, side aisles, and short transept arms, the chapel was provided with a dome that covered the entire crossing area, which also served as the sanctuary. Lavish decoration, well preserved, covers the interior marble revetment on the lower walls, mosaics on the upper walls and vaults, and an elaborately carved and painted wood ceiling over the nave (see Georgopoulou chapter, this volume).

## CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

---

A brief survey of this nature cannot present a complete and nuanced overview of the impact of Byzantine architecture on that of nearby territories, but the examples discussed here do point to how widespread and thorough that influence was. The common denominator between these buildings and their Byzantine prototypes was the Orthodox religious tradition. The spread of Orthodox Christianity led to the spread of Byzantine architectural concepts that would best serve the rites of this branch of Christianity. Regional preferences in architectural types, construction methods, and decorative details as well as a trend toward verticality led to distinctive adaptations of the Byzantine model to reflect local tastes. In the secular realm, the position of Constantinople as heir to Rome and leading Christian capital led rulers in other lands to emulate, at least in small ways, the glory of the imperial palace and its buildings.

There is much room for further study on this topic. With few exceptions, none of the buildings has been studied in detail; much could be learned from an accurate measuring and drawing, analysis of the building fabric and construction details, and, in some cases, archaeological work. Thorough studies of the Early Byzantine-influenced buildings in Ukraine and Russia would be especially welcomed and more so if they could be published in a more widely read Western European language. Research into these buildings has often been limited to studies done by local scholars, who often fail to consider implications that a broader overview might raise. This academic regionalism is evident in many places even on the national level; there are good studies of architecture in Norman Sicily and Norman Calabria, but no single study that synthesizes the material from all parts of Italy controlled by the Normans that could provide a “big picture” overview.

## REFERENCES

---

- Bandmann, Günter. 2005. *Early Medieval Architecture as Bearer of Meaning* (New York).
- Bergman, Robert. 1991. “Byzantine Influence and Private Patronage in a Newly Discovered Medieval Church in Amalfi’s S. Michele in Pogerola.” *JSAH* 50: 421–25.

- Bozzoni, C., and A. S. Curuni. 2003. "Una chiesa greca in Calabria: S. Giovanni Vecchio, storia e conservazione." *Opus: Quaderno di storia dell'architettura e restauro* 7: 39–58.
- Brenk, B., and F. Agnello. 2010. *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*. 4 vols. (Modena).
- Brumfield, William C. 1993. *A History of Russian Architecture* (Cambridge).
- Cecchi, Roberto. 2003. *La basilica di San Marco: La costruzione bizantina del IX secolo. Permanenze e trasformazioni* (Venice).
- Ćirković, S., V. Korać, and G. Babić. 1986. *Studenica Monastery* (Belgrade).
- Ćurčić, S. 1990. "The Architecture." In E. Kitzinger *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo*, 27–104 (Washington, DC).
- Ćurčić, S. 2010. *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven).
- Demus, O. 1960. *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture, Sculpture* (Washington, DC).
- Di Stefano, G. 1979. *Monumenti della Sicilia Normanna*. 2nd ed. (Palermo).
- Dittelbach, T., ed. 2011. *Die Cappella Palatina in Palermo: Geschichte, Kunst, Funktionen* (Swindoft).
- Hamilton, G. H. 1983. *The Art and Architecture of Russia*. 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth).
- Johnson, M. 2016. "Art and Architecture." In *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy*, edited by J. J. Arnold, M. S. Bjornlie, and K. Sessa, 350–89 (Leiden).
- Krautheimer, R. 1986. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. 4th ed. with S. Ćurčić (Harmondsworth).
- Mango, C. 1976. *Byzantine Architecture* (New York).
- Nicklies, C. 2004. "Builders, Patrons, and Identity: The Domed Basilicas of Sicily and Calabria." *Gesta* 43: 99–114.
- Ousterhout, R. 2019. *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (New York).
- Papacostas, T. 2010. "The Medieval Progeny of the Holy Apostles." In *The Byzantine World*, edited by P. Stephenson, 386–405 (London).
- Richardson, J. 1997. "Elementi bizantini nell'architettura delle chiese di San Marco, di Santa Fosca di Torcello e del Duomo di Jesolo." In *Storia dell'arte marciana: L'architettura. Atti del Convegno*, edited by R. Pfolacco, 176–83 (Venice).
- Tronzo, William. 1997. *The Cultures of His Kingdom: Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton).
- Voronin, N. 1957a. "Die Baukunst der Kiewer Rus." In *Geschichte der russischen Kunst*, edited by I. Grabar, V. Lazarev, and V. Kemenov, 67–94 (Dresden).
- Voronin, N. 1957b. "Die Baukunst der Wladimir-Susdaler Rus." In *Geschichte der russischen Kunst*, edited by I. Grabar, V. Lazarev, and V. Kemenov, 210–49 (Dresden).
- Westbrook, Nigel. 2013. "Syncretic Symbolism and Ritual Movement in the Chrysotriklinos of the Byzantine Emperors." *Architectura* 43: 129–43.



---

*Decoration of Structures/Byzantine  
Wall Decoration*

---



## CHAPTER 25

---

# MOSAICS

---

LIZ JAMES

A mosaic is essentially an image made from putting together small pieces, or *tesserae*, of colored glass, stone, and other materials. The medium was used on both walls and floors throughout the Byzantine period, though wall mosaics (including mosaics on ceilings and vaults) were increasingly dominant. As objects of study, mosaics fall into many categories: are they a part of the building's fabric (and hence architecture) or of its fixtures and fittings (and so decoration)? Are they a major or a minor art form, an art or a craft?

Relatively little is known about Byzantine wall mosaics. There are no documents about them; few texts mention them; none is associated with any named artists until the twelfth century. No source records how mosaics were made, where the materials came from, or what they cost; no medieval author provides much information on how mosaics were received by their audiences; no patron has left an explanation of why he or she commissioned this mosaic looking like this. At the church from Daphni in Greece, where one of the most beautiful and full programs of mosaic decoration survives, there is no information about the dedication of the church (it may have been to the Mother of God), its function (perhaps it was a monastery), its patron (all that is known is that they were wealthy enough to build a church and decorate it with mosaics), its artist (no idea), or even the date of the mosaics (the church building has been dated to the eleventh century; the mosaics have been dated more widely between the tenth and twelfth centuries).

The most concrete evidence about Byzantine mosaics therefore comes from the mosaics themselves. Despite this, the study of wall mosaics is not as thorough as it might be. Most surviving mosaics are on the walls of churches and for many of those churches, full surveys do not exist, or are focused on style and iconography (Demus 1948; Demus 1949; Demus 1984) and make little mention of materials and techniques (in contrast, see, for example, Megaw and Hawkins 1977; Mouriki 1985; Terry and Maguire 2007, all of whom also discuss materials and techniques). Broader surveys of mosaics in cities such as Rome, Thessaloniki, and Ravenna (Andaloro and Romano 2006; Deliyannis 2010; Bakirtzis et. al 2012), covering a wider time-period, tend to consider these mosaics in relative isolation in their city setting and again do not take into account technical aspects. Further, studies of

mosaics sometimes treat them as if they were paintings, as images existing independently of their physical settings, underplaying pragmatic information about their location within a building and distance away from an audience, as well as information about their size, surface area, and the relative proportions of different materials. The physical nature of wall mosaics has not always been presented as the fundamental part of understanding a mosaic that it is (Andreescu-Treadgold 2013). The study and analysis of the glass tesserae from which mosaics are made, for example, is beginning to reveal patterns of manufacture. If these can be developed and pieced together, then the glass from mosaics will provide a picture of one form of trade network within the Mediterranean, not only East and West, but also Islamic and Christian (see Antonaras chapter, this volume).

One issue in the study of mosaics is the use of the term *Byzantine*. Strictly, a Byzantine mosaic is one from the shifting territories of the Byzantine Empire, but mosaics have tended to be perceived as a Byzantine art form par excellence, with a common perception that Byzantine artists traveled the Mediterranean world to carry out major programs of mosaic work. But how far wall mosaic was a Byzantine medium is debatable. There seems to have been an astonishingly wide spread of mosaics across the Mediterranean world (James 2017). Although chance of survival plays a crucial part in this, many more mosaics survive on walls from Western medieval Europe, most notably Italy, than from the Byzantine Empire, and that owes something to the use and continued existence of churches in the two regions. On the other hand, much more archaeological data, in the form of scattered tesserae or mosaic fragments, is available for wall mosaics from the eastern part of the Mediterranean than from the western, and this may well reflect the emphases of Christian archaeologists in the Holy Land. How this material fits together and whether what survives is enough to offer any telling connections is unclear, but the extent of the medium and its continued use on walls over a period roughly from the first century CE into the sixteenth century undermine its implicit Byzantinism.

A fundamental problem with many wall mosaics is their dating. Not many mosaics have an absolute date that can be accepted without question. A reasonable number are dated on the supposition that they were installed at the time the building they grace was built, though this is not always the case, and indeed understanding the date of a building is not always as straightforward as it might be. For example, the Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki is dated through three inscriptions within it that claim it was constructed through the patronage of Patriarch Niphon (1310–1314); dendrochronology suggested that the church was built all of a piece and dated it to 1329 or just after, some fifteen years after Niphon's removal from office (Bakirtzis et. al 2012). It is encouraging that the dates are in the same century but the difference between them has caused considerable debate because the mosaics in the church strongly resemble those in the Church of the Chora in Constantinople, built between 1316 and 1321. Consequently, the question of whether the Thessalonikan mosaics should be dated before or after those of the Chora has considerable implications for understanding mosaicists working in the fourteenth century. In the case of San Marco in Venice, the church itself was built in the eleventh century, but a very good case can be made that the mosaics were installed over a long period from then on, down into the present day. More widely, some mosaics are associated

by texts with particular patrons, especially imperial or papal patrons, and so can, presumably, be dated to that patron's lifetime or time as pope or emperor; patrons are sometimes identified within the mosaics themselves and it is reasonable to presume that the mosaic reflects an act of patronage from a living person, though this need not always have been the case. But critically, many mosaics are undated and there is no consensus as to their date. So, for example, the stunningly beautiful and lavish mosaic program of the Rotunda in Thessaloniki has been dated to several points between the fourth and seventh centuries, with a general feeling that it might be fourth century; a small, slightly scruffy mosaic from Durrës in Albania has been dated to the fifth century on the basis of its style and the eighth to eleventh centuries on the basis of the sequencing of layers of plaster, paint, and mosaic on the wall (Bowes and Mitchell 2009; Bakirtzis et. al 2012).

## MAKING MOSAICS

---

Without written evidence about making mosaics, what is said about it derives from observations and conjectures. Next to nothing is known for certain about the processes involved or the costs, but the scale of surviving mosaics suggests that it was a costly endeavor, perhaps four times more expensive than wall painting (Harding 1988; Winfield 2005; James 2006; Neri et. al 2016). It was more labor-intensive and the materials needed were more complicated, and it almost certainly took longer to make. Consequently, the use of the medium broadcast messages of wealth in terms of public and private ostentation, emulation, and imitation. And mosaic was valued for the effects of brightness and brilliance that it could create. Byzantine authors remarked on its dazzling, glittering, sparkling effect and its ability to create light (James 1996).

A huge amount of planning and logistical work went into making a mosaic. Although sequentially, mosaics were installed in buildings, preparations could not wait until after the construction work was finished. One central concern would have been obtaining the tesserae needed for the mosaic itself. By the fifth century, wall mosaics were largely made from glass. Glass itself was made in a two-stage process. Raw glass was made in industrial quantities in furnaces in the Levant and possibly Italy; it was then shipped around the Roman Empire to be made into glass objects (Freestone 2006). When and where raw glass was turned into tesserae is unknown, whether in "tesserae factories," or glass workshops or on the site, or a mixture of all three: no evidence of any sort survives. It seems plausible that some tesserae came to a site as colored lumps of glass needing to be heated and cut, while others were already cut. But whatever the form of the glass, it is highly probable that in almost every case, glass for mosaics had to be imported to the specific site. Although glass lumps and even tesserae would all work as cargo or even as ballast, what went where must have depended to some extent on the location of the site, the quantity of tesserae needed, and the colors required. Once the glass was on site, it might well need further treatment, perhaps coloring, perhaps turning into tesserae (possibly the most demanding and tedious of the many tasks around mosaic-manufacture),



and then grading, sorting, and storing. Tools, furnaces, fuel, accommodation, supplies, and the workers themselves, from mosaicists to glass cutters, plasterers to laborers, were all required (Harding 1988). At no point in these processes can it be assumed that glass or tesserae came from Constantinople or the Byzantine Empire. The finished, colored tesserae in the mosaicist's hands were at least two stages away from the manufacture of the actual glass, and working could have taken place almost anywhere in the Mediterranean world. While we do not know, the question of materials is still important.

The size and form of the building were further factors in the planning of the mosaics: what mosaics went where inside the structure. The relationship between wall mosaic and architecture is a close one, since mosaic is affected by the different angles of surfaces within the building, as well as by its lighting—the positioning of the windows and doors (Schibille 2014). But how far architects and mosaicists worked together, whether indeed they were ever one and the same, is another unknown. Indeed, who the mosaic artists were is a mystery. It is not until the twelfth century that several names emerge, Ephraim and Basil, both working in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (Figure 25.1), but nothing is known of these men.

However, the shortage of named mosaicists in Byzantium says less about attitudes to mosaics specifically and more about medieval attitudes to art and artists as a whole. In



FIGURE 25.1. Basilus pictor and the twelfth-century mosaics in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Photo: Liz James.

## Drawing 1

**STAGES IN  
MAKING A  
MOSAIC**1 Sketch on the  
masonry2 Painting on  
roughcast plaster3 Painting on  
setting bed

4 Finished mosaic

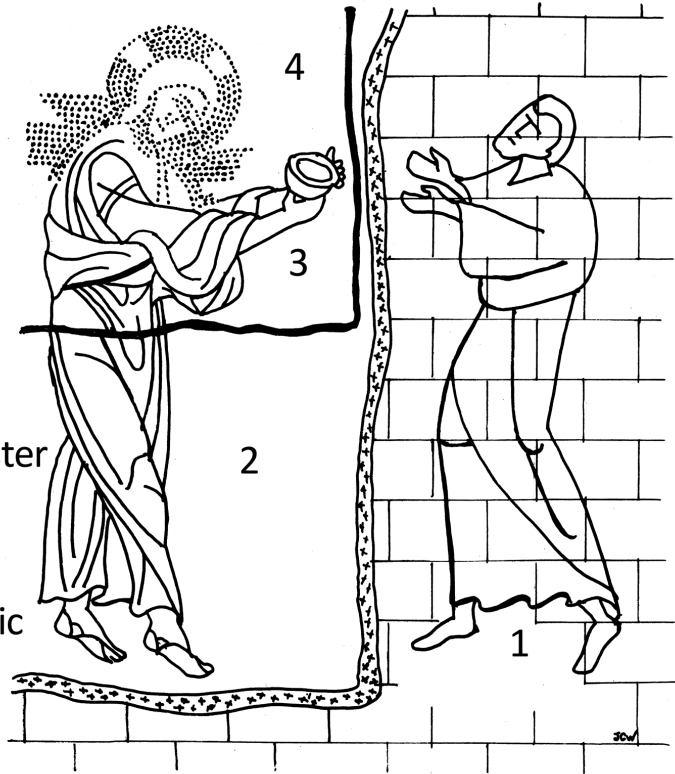


FIGURE 25.2. Stages in making a mosaic. Drawing by June Winfield, used by permission.

fact, individual artists are unlikely ever to have been the whole picture as far as mosaic-making was concerned. It was a medium that demanded “team-working” and needed to be carried out by groups of people.

In terms of making mosaics, it is clear that the basic method for putting mosaics on to walls was relatively unchanging. (Figure 25.2).

A scaffold was erected, coarse plaster was laid on masonry, and finer plaster placed on top of that as a setting bed for the tesserae. Once the wall or vault was plastered, it could then be drawn or sketched on. Such drawing seems to have taken place inconsistently and on different layers of plaster, even on the masonry, but is most common on the setting bed itself, where it was used to different extents and incorporated greater or lesser amounts of detail. It might show whole figures in detail (as with the *Deesis* panel in the fourteenth-century Chora church in Constantinople; Figure 25.3) or sketched figures (in the sixth-century mosaics at Poreč in Croatia, the underdrawing is closer to sketches than full-blown images) or simply areas of color.

The most important aspect of underdrawing may have been to guide those responsible for setting the tesserae of the mosaic, mapping out the design in effect. Such preparatory work would have considerably sped up the process.



FIGURE 25.3. The fourteenth-century Deesis panel, Chora church, Constantinople. Photo: Liz James.

The manual insertion of thousands or millions of small tesserae was the final act. A mosaic is made by placing blocks of pure color next to each other; every color is affected by its adjacent colors and the effect of mixing or shading happens not so much within the image itself but directly in the eye of the observer (a similar technique to that employed by the nineteenth-century Pointillists). The type of material used can make a difference, as can the ways in which the tesserae are laid; even the depth to which they are laid, as well as the distance from which they are viewed, can all affect what we see in a mosaic. The mosaicists' skill lay in putting together all of these elements to create an effective image. On the scaffold, artists are presumed to have had the requisite containers of sorted tesserae for the section of mosaic, replenished when necessary. While the drawing on the base plaster probably showed the overall design of the mosaic, the mosaic setter presumably decided on the shape and color of each cube at the moment of setting. The setter's role was to select and mix the tesserae in their different hues, tones, and materials in order to create visible shapes (through outlining, for example), the balance of colors and tones (the lights and darks), and the reflection of light from the mirrored surface of each tessera. The same technical devices recur. Checkerboarding, for example, the juxtaposition of dark and light cubes which can create shading, softness, and brightness, can be seen in seventh-century, eleventh-century, and fourteenth-century

mosaics; tilting, the angling of tesserae to reflect and refract light, is used in mosaics from the fifth to the fourteenth centuries. The mosaics of Poreč and San Vitale in Ravenna reveal something of the division of labor within a mosaic. At both sites, the mosaicists started together in the center and moved away from each other (Andreescu-Treadgold 1992). But we have no real idea of how quickly a mosaicist could work since it is almost impossible to see joins between patches of work in a well-executed mosaic, and even harder to be sure what they might indicate. On the scaffold, the use of different shades of colored glass or of gold tesserae could produce different visual effects, though how much of this was design and careful sorting, and how much the effect of what the mosaicist had available, is another issue. Several mosaics also offer evidence of supplies of glass running low, most notably at Poreč, where the mosaicists clearly improvised, but also in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople where red paint used on the tesserae of the feet of the Mother of God in the apse mosaic served to hide a lack of red glass. This serves very effectively to make the point that a mosaic could only be made from the materials available to its makers and the availability of tesserae had a crucial effect on the appearance of a mosaic (Greenhalgh 2008).

## EARLY MOSAICS, FOURTH TO NINTH CENTURIES

---

The inference of the surviving first- to fourth-century material is that from a concentration in Italy, perhaps even Rome, wall mosaics spread across the Roman world, from Gaul and North Africa to Greece, Asia Minor, and the Levant, in the third and fourth centuries (Sear 1977; James 2017).

Mosaics were used on floors long before it they were employed for walls; they were a popular art form in the Roman world. It seems fair to say that wall and vault mosaic developed initially in Rome and Italy: the earliest wall mosaics have been found in Latium and Naples, gradually spreading into North Italy and then beyond, throughout the rest of the empire (Sear 1977; Boschetti et. al 2012). From perhaps the first century CE, mosaic began to be used in water features—on the walls of *nymphaea*, on fountains, and in bath houses. With this development, the materials also changed. Initially wall mosaics were largely made of shell, pumice, stones, and even paint. Increasingly glass was used, as faience and Egyptian blue smalt, and then as colored glass and as tesserae, deliberately cut cubes of glass, perhaps at the start of the first century CE (in the tomb in Rome known as the Colombarium of Pomponius Hylas), though it was used in floor mosaics from much earlier (Sear 1977). But glass tesserae made all the difference to wall mosaics, for glass was a perfect medium to use in the context of water and garden architecture. What is also apparent in the surviving use of glass in Roman wall and vault mosaics is a developing appreciation of the potential of the medium on a curved surface: of using glass as a sparkling, reflective surface, playing with light and water, and very different from the

effect of stone, pottery, or shell. The use of these other media never died out in medieval mosaics; it simply diminished in quantity and was used for the creation of deliberate visual effects. The earliest evidence of the use of gold tesserae, so much a feature of later wall mosaics, appears to be from the 50s CE (in the decoration of a series of niches in Gardens of Lucullus in Rome). Whether floor mosaicists also made wall mosaics is unknown, but there seems no reason why not: many of the earliest surviving wall mosaics share aspects of floor mosaics (as is the case with Santa Constanza in Rome), both in design and the choice of materials. The use of glass in floor mosaics was always exceptional and in small quantities, partly because glass was a fragile medium underfoot.

Wall mosaics became increasingly popular among the great imperial builders of Rome such as Nero, Hadrian, and, later, Caracalla and Diocletian. They were increasingly employed in imperial mausolea as early as the fourth century (Johnson 2009). Wall mosaic was also used in other public spaces such as theaters and circuses: one such survives in the Colosseum in Rome. Mosaic had been used in a religious setting from the second century (*Mithraea*) and in the catacombs in Rome and Naples from the third century: the mosaics in the cemetery under St. Peter's must be third century; a tomb niche in the Catacomb of Domitilla, used between the second and seventh centuries, includes Christian mosaics (Sear 1977; Andaloro and Romano 2006). After Constantine's conversion to Christianity in the early fourth century, mosaic was clearly seen as an appropriate art form for use in the decoration of his large new Christian churches in Rome, above all at Old St. Peter's. Others besides emperors patronized the medium: in Rome, the fifth-century mosaics of Santa Sabina were the commission of a deacon, Peter. Traces of other episcopal wall mosaics have survived from several key imperial sites including Trier, Ravenna, and Milan, all capitals of the empire at different times. The same may have been the case at Thessaloniki where the mosaics in the Rotunda (the Church of St. George) are magnificent, lavish in materials, splendid in artistry (Nasrallah 2005), and inconclusively dated.

Although no physical evidence for fourth-century wall mosaics survives from major cities such as Constantinople (where the earliest for which there is evidence are fifth century), Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, their existence in other imperial cities makes it very likely that there were wall mosaics there too. Between the fourth and sixth centuries, it is possible to see a steady increase in the numbers of wall mosaics made, and to see them concentrated in certain areas. Evidence for wall mosaics comes mostly, though not entirely, from churches, of different sizes and functions, across the whole of the Later Roman Empire—with the exception of Northern Europe. There appears to have been a considerable range of patrons, from emperors and popes to bishops and nobles, and anonymous patrons such as the anonymous woman, "she whose name is known to God," who commissioned the small fifth-century mosaic in Hosios David in Thessaloniki. The mosaics themselves range from the monumental (and very costly) at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome or the magnificent imperial church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, often covering most of the church walls, to smaller examples localized within the building, usually in the apse, as with the small Cypriot churches of Lagoudera,

Kiti, and Livadia, all of whose mosaics are undated but traditionally ascribed to the sixth century (Megaw and Hawkins, 19977; Winfield, 2005). From the same time, mosaics are also known from Thessaloniki and Ravenna (see fig 7.2), both major cities throughout the period, and in contrast, from St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai, a Justinianic monastic foundation. Wall mosaic was particularly popular in baptisteries, especially in Italy, where it survives in a variety of churches, from the cathedral of Naples to the episcopal church of the town of Albenga in northern Italy. This was perhaps a relic from its use in water features.

A further implication of the surviving material is that wall mosaic-making reached a peak in the fifth and sixth centuries, one unmatched again until the twelfth (James 2017). There is a dramatic drop in the physical evidence for the use of the medium in the seventh and eighth centuries. The most extensive surviving mosaic programs of this period are actually from the Islamic world, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (ca. 691–692), and the Great Mosque of Damascus (706 and 714/5) (Creswell 1969, 65–131, 142–210; Gautier-van Berchem 1969, 246–322 and 323–72; Grabar 2006, Figure 14.3). The former was originally decorated outside and inside with mosaic, about 1,280 square meters of mosaic in all, making it the largest surviving program until the twelfth-century Christian mosaics in the cathedral at Monreale in Sicily. In scale and complexity, these Umayyad building projects far surpassed anything surviving in Rome or Constantinople at the same time, and both the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque played a significant role in the creation of a distinctive Muslim aesthetic (Flood 2001).

But the question that has most bothered art historians is whether these are “Byzantine” mosaics, a discussion framed around the relationship between the materials of the mosaics and their mosaicists as Byzantine. Several later Muslim authors (none predating the ninth century) claimed that either the Byzantine emperor sent, or was compelled by the caliph to send, workmen and materials for the making of the great seventh- and eighth-century mosques and later, for the Great Mosque of Cordoba. These texts have either been accepted at more-or-less face value (Gibb 1958) or dismissed as later inventions (Gautier-van Berchem 1969). Some of the reason for their acceptance lies in that assumption that mosaic was a Byzantine medium and that the mosaicists must have come from Constantinople, as only the Byzantine capital could maintain a corps of craftsmen capable of the high technical competence found in the Dome of the Rock. But while Byzantine mosaicists could have been involved, it was not necessary that they had to be, for there seems no reason to suppose that mosaics were not still made in the Levant in the seventh century. Wall mosaic was certainly widespread in the fifth- and sixth-century Levant, and after the Muslim conquest of the region, churches continued to be built and decorated (Flood 2012). Furthermore, it was from the Levant that the Roman Empire had imported much of its glass.

It is not only these Islamic mosaics that have been described as “Byzantine.” The same is true of wall mosaics in Italy, notably in sixth-century Ravenna and eighth- and ninth-century Rome. In Ravenna, Emperor Valentinian III and his mother in the early fifth century and Theoderic, the Ostrogothic ruler of Italy, had used the medium

extensively in the city on public buildings, notably churches and palaces. This was a trend maintained in the sixth century by the bishops of the city when it was the capital of Byzantine Italy. Most famously at San Vitale, mosaic panels depicting Emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora were placed by Bishop Maximian in the apse of the church (Figure 25.4).



FIGURE 25.4 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 13A). San Vitale. Photo: Simon Lane, used by permission.

In Rome, where mosaics steadily continued to be commissioned by popes throughout the fifth to ninth centuries, use of the medium is sometimes entangled with discussions about the identity of certain popes (John VII, Paschal I, for example) as “Greek”: the idea is that “Greek” popes used “Byzantine” mosaic in a “Byzantine” fashion. These definitions raise several questions, however, about what it means to label a mosaic as “Byzantine.” Is it its appearance (its style), its subject matter (iconography), its artists, or its patrons? At San Vitale, the patron was not the emperor but the local bishop and, whether his artists were Byzantine or not, whether his mosaics looked “Byzantine” or not (in fact, they look like the mosaics of the Euphrasian basilica at Poreč, just across the Adriatic; see Figure 11.1/Color Plate 5), he had a local and regional agenda and a rivalry with Rome. In Rome itself, mosaics steadily continued to be commissioned by popes throughout the fifth to ninth centuries, and it is questionable whether either Byzantine artists or Byzantine materials were needed in the city.

So one of the problems in describing a mosaic in Italy or the Muslim world as “Byzantine” is that it overlooks the traditions of mosaic-making in the region, which perhaps made it unnecessary to hire artists from the Byzantine Empire. Another is that this label obscures the local significances of the image: the elements of its style and iconography that are not necessarily Byzantine; and its function in a particular place at a particular time. Perhaps more interesting is the question of from where the patrons got their ideas and to whom they were speaking in their commissioning of mosaic. There is a world of difference between deliberately wanting to be Byzantine and wanting to incorporate elements of Byzantine style. How far the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna or St. Peter’s in Rome or the Great Mosque of Damascus were in dialogue with Constantinople is one story; how far Ravenna and Rome were rivals, how much the Umayyad mosques were a response to Levantine and Egyptian Christian churches, is at least as significant a story. These buildings surely reflected architectural traditions and political concerns in their regions. This is not to say that Byzantine mosaicists could not have been involved, merely that their employment was a choice rather than a necessity.

The period of the fourth to ninth centuries was one in which the Roman Empire slowly unraveled, changing into a series of so-called barbarian kingdoms in the West and the Byzantine Empire in the East. Both East and West retained and adapted elements of that empire in administration, in tax, in law, in faith; the use of mosaic in this period was conceivably another element of that adoption of something familiarly Roman by different rulers, different people looking to assert their relationship with the Roman Empire. Mosaic itself was a powerful message, and that simply by using it, a patron made reference to the traditions of the (Christian) Roman Empire that lay all around in the form of Late Antique cities and towns. In the Christian West and Byzantine East, mosaic as a medium perhaps carried enough overtones of imperial power, as well as religious triumph, to be worth appropriating by the Islamic world.



## LATER MOSAICS, NINTH TO FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

---

By the ninth century, the world was a different, more fragmented place, one in which the Western Roman Empire had become a collection of different states and kingdoms, the Eastern Roman Empire had become the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic world was firmly established as another power in the region. The ninth century functions as the break between “early” and “late” for a technological reason: it marks the transition from Roman soda-lime glass to what is called plant-ash glass, a shift that can be easily detected in the analysis of the material (Henderson 2005). Any mosaic containing tesserae of plant-ash glass must be ninth century or later (or the tesserae denote repairs). Why there was such a change in technology is not known and its implications are not clear. However, the transition to plant-ash glass comes at a point when there is a decrease in evidence for mosaic-making and it is possible that the two were connected, that for some reason, there was a decrease in the manufacture of glass and that this had an effect on the making of things from glass, including mosaics. Mosaics in the Levant seem to have dried up completely, and this may be another pointer in the argument that the Arab invasions of the seventh century did not cause dearth, confusion, and collapse in the area, but that the economic downturn was later.

In Byzantium, the ninth century in particular is also seen as a period when the making of art was affected by the Iconoclastic Controversy and questions about the validity and place of figural images in Christian worship (see Brubaker chapter, this volume). Nonetheless, mosaics continued to be made: textual sources reveal their creation as does the huge outline of a cross forming the apse mosaic of Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, and the ghostly cross visible behind the image of the Mother of God and her Child in the apse of the now-destroyed Church of the Dormition in Nicaea. In fact, in comparison with the Islamic and Western European worlds, the ninth and tenth centuries were a good time for mosaics in Byzantium. The image of the Mother of God and Child flanked by archangels in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, and the other mosaics in the tympana there and the Patriarchal Rooms reflect the victory of the Iconophiles (Mango and Hawkins 1965, 1972; Cormack 1981). What both the tympana and apse images also reveal is the difficulty of putting figural images into Hagia Sophia where the wall surfaces are too large to allow figures to be seen at any real scale. The inscription in the apse indicates that the emperors were, at least in public, the moving forces and the financial muscle behind the mosaics in Hagia Sophia, though the mosaic above the west door of the church in the narthex has been used to make a case for patriarchal influence (Cormack 1981). The other surviving mosaics in the church (tenth–fourteenth centuries) all seem to have been imperial commissions, often depicting emperors in some form or other or offering comments on imperial relations with God.

Eleventh-century Byzantine mosaics have formed the focus of two related debates. The first deals with the relationships between mosaics from this period across the

Mediterranean and the question of Byzantine influences; the second is in the establishment of a program for church decoration. The mosaics in question are the fairly complete sets in the three Greek churches of Hosios Loukas near Phokis, Nea Moni on Chios, and Daphni, just outside Athens. Intriguingly, all three churches are relatively small and relatively insignificant: none is in or near major cities of the empire, and the survival of their mosaics is a perhaps fortuitous result of this. On the basis of these mosaics, however, the influences of Byzantine artists have been traced in Italy (at Torcello and Venice) and in Kiev. In Kiev, this seems a reasonable conclusion: there appears to be no other tradition of mosaic-making in Rus' other than in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, a tradition that can be tied to the diplomatic artistic patronage of the Princes of Kiev and their engagement with Orthodox Christianity. In Italy, however, the picture may be more complicated, as mosaics were an established art form and the churches in which they were placed served for Latin Christian rites. If Byzantine artists and styles were employed, this was more a matter of choice than necessity; that such artists and styles have been detected in Northern Italy, at Torcello and San Marco in Venice, may reflect regional assertions of independence and alignment.

The three Greek churches present a similar basic program of mosaics: Christ, in the dome; the Mother of God in the apse; scenes from Christ's life in the nave; and saints throughout the church. These correspondences have led to the development of a "standard program" of Middle Byzantine church decoration that ran from east to west and from top to bottom, conceptualized in terms of the divine in the cupola and apses, the Feasts of the Church in the middle, and the choir of saints at the lowest level (Demus 1948; Mathews 1988): this was probably a looser and less idealized system than some scholars treat it.

One of the problems for understanding "Byzantine" mosaics, however, is the relative shortage of material from the empire itself, of mosaics that might be described as Byzantine because they are found in Byzantium. In the eleventh century, in addition to the three Greek churches, several more survive in Thessaloniki and a panel depicting Emperor Constantine IX and his empress, Zoe, in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The picture does not change significantly for the twelfth century, where almost the only survival is yet another imperial panel in Hagia Sophia, though textual sources make it clear that there was considerably more mosaic in existence. However, a considerable amount of mosaic does survive in Italy, from Venice, Rome, and Sicily, together with the mosaics of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (Demus 1949, 1984; Kitzinger 1990; Bacci 2015). These have been used to fill in the gaps; their study dominated their use to reconstruct lost arts from the empire itself. Consequently, they have been discussed regularly and inconclusively in terms of their "Byzantine" qualities and the "Byzantine" artists responsible for them (e.g., Demus 1949; Demus 1984; Kitzinger 1949). Similar debates have concerned the mosaics of the Church of the Nativity, commissioned by the Latin king of Jerusalem, the Latin bishop of Bethlehem, and the Byzantine emperor together, and made by one Ephraim, whose ethnicity has been the subject of considerable discussion. It has been suggested that the technique of mosaic was so coveted by the Latin and Slav people of the Byzantine sphere

of influence that they strove to master it themselves as soon as possible in order to become independent of Constantinople. However easy it was to acquire technique, these people found it “next to impossible to master the subtleties of execution, let alone the inimitable refinements of style” (Demus 1949, 371). Instead, they produced “provincial art,” mosaic degenerated, and fresh supplies of Byzantine mosaicists had to be called for (Demus 1949).

However, the idea of “Byzantium” coupled to a lack of local artistic skills is too easily invoked to explain these mosaics. It may be more useful to ask why mosaic was employed, what it was about the medium that caused it to be used so widely and enthusiastically. Mosaic may have been perceived as a Byzantine medium, although we do not know how “Byzantine style” was perceived and valued in the twelfth century, and by whom? What, for example, did the Venetian Council or the Pope or the Norman king Roger of Sicily see and recognize as Byzantine? How do we know these borrowings were meaningful in the ways we think they were? What did the elements of the mosaics that look Byzantine say to their twelfth-century patrons and audiences? Was this similar in Venice, Rome, and Sicily? Were any of these mosaics identified as Byzantine rather than Christian or even Roman or Venetian or Norman Sicilian in the twelfth century? In fact, the recently cleaned mosaics of the Church of the Nativity draw together Byzantine art, the art of Eastern Christians, Romanesque, Gothic, Muslim art, all in a Levantine context. This is the sort of art sometimes called Crusader art, the art of the Frankish colonists in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, at times defined as a local in its style, one about local interests, local pasts, and local beliefs. The mosaics of the Church of the Nativity evoked Byzantium and Rome, but in the Levant, mosaic was also a medium used in the great mosques, so its use here was also a statement of Christian triumph. While art from the Byzantine Empire was influential across the Mediterranean in media such as silks or bronze doors, there is still the question of what a patron was doing in importing such objects, a difference again between deliberately wanting to be Byzantine or wanting to incorporate elements of Byzantium.

A great many mosaics also survive from the thirteenth century; indeed, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries come close to rivaling the fifth and sixth in terms of quantity. The majority are in Italy, where the medium seems to have been increasingly popular and used on façades of buildings in a way almost never found in Byzantium. Of course, this is also the chance of survival, but that so much survives is itself suggestive of a mosaic-making industry, perhaps coupled with the growth of the glass-making industry found both in Venice and in other Italian cities. What survives of Byzantine mosaic-making comes from buildings with imperial and elite patrons, but also suggests that cash was in shorter supply than it had been. During the period of the Latin Empire (1204–1267), mosaic was used for parts of church decorations in the rival Byzantine states of Epiros (at Arta and Pyli), Nikaea, and Trebizond. The Deesis mosaic in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople may have been an imperial commission celebrating the restoration of the empire after 1267; repairs and new installations in the same church in the mid-fourteenth century are the last known mosaics undertaken in the capital. The mosaics at the Chora church and the Pammakaristos are impressive, but their scale

and the simultaneous use of wall painting suggests that even their privileged patrons struggled to afford the medium. The year 1453 brought an end to Byzantine mosaic: it was not an art form adopted by the Ottoman Turks. Mosaic as an art form also fizzled out in fifteenth-century Italy. The reasons for this are impossible to establish but it may have been a combination of changing fashions and the move to the Classical away from the Early Christian, of alterations in church architecture, especially with the popularity of Gothic architecture and stained glass, both of which would have made mosaic a less successful form of decoration, or perhaps because the costs and slowness of mosaic compared to fresco-painting made it less desirable.

## QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

---

Traditionally and implicitly, mosaics have been presented within a model that sought to explore what of each mosaic can be defined as “Byzantine,” aspects such as style, iconography, artists, and even quality. But there are different questions that need to be asked. How much mosaic was there in the medieval world and where? How much of it can be defined as “Byzantine,” and what does it mean to use that term? Others relate to the making of mosaics and questions of supply and demand, of technology, manufacture, and costs: how expensive were mosaics? And why did people want mosaic? What did they achieve through the use of the medium? As mentioned, much remains to be learned about the technologies of mosaic-making as well as their centers and the spread through the Mediterranean world.

There were more mosaics in the Middle Ages than has been realized, much more from the world outside the Byzantine Empire than from within it. Mosaic-making had its highs and lows; the reasons for these shifts are not known. They have been associated here with the technological change in glass-making but Iconoclasm, the rise of Islam, and the traditional shift from the Roman to the medieval world may have been influential. This trajectory asks for further exploration. In addition, the relationships between centers of production in terms of materials, styles, techniques, iconography, and artists are far less clear-cut and therefore more interesting and complex than is often assumed. The idea that mosaics and mosaicists alike came in the first instance from Byzantium has to be challenged. In cities other than Constantinople where the art flourished, the case can be made that the Byzantine look was the patrons’ choice, not the use of artists. Political events may consistently have had an effect on the creation of new work; concurrently, the creation of new mosaics may have been in turn a political statement. The use of mosaic in fifth-century Ravenna was almost certainly Theoderic’s bid to establish that city as a suitable capital for a ruler aspiring to imperial traditions. He may have copied the idea from Byzantium or Rome, but his appropriation was surely noticed and responded to in Italy, if not necessarily in Constantinople. Similarly, the use of mosaic in the three Byzantine states of Nikaea, Epiros, and Trebizond created after the loss of Constantinople in 1204 was surely as much a political statement as an artistic one, both

an adoption of the medium and a throwing down of the gauntlet to rivals, both local and international.

Very specific local factors may also explain the presence of mosaics at particular locations, for mosaics offer snapshots of moments when patrons felt it was worth investing in the medium, moments when its value was specific to a person and to a building. These instances are worth further investigation. The wall mosaics in Justiniana Prima, in the sixth century, for example, were surely a reflection of that city's foundation by Justinian I, marking out his birthplace. In contrast, although Justinian and Theodora are depicted in the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna, they never went to Ravenna and nothing suggests that they were the patrons of the work. Rather, the mosaics were the project of local notables and must have rebounded to the credit of those men, above all the city's bishop, Maximian, depicted in the mosaic as a member of the imperial court. Similarly, the patrons of mosaics in Georgia, Rus', and Armenia may have had individual reasons, in addition to more general ones about expressing prestige and demonstrating value, for favoring mosaic as their medium of choice. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the increase in the number of places with wall mosaics in Italy is probably a reflection of local rivalries and competition between cities.

Mosaic appears to have retained an imperial aura, particularly in Byzantium where it continued to be a medium of choice for members of the imperial family. Here it was redolent both of Byzantium's Christian heritage and of its living tradition as the incarnate Roman Empire, God's Chosen Empire on earth. Plausibly in both the Eastern Roman Empire and in what had been the Roman West, mosaic continued to be used because of its ancient heritage as Roman and Christian. When mosaic later lost its value, it became unfashionable and thus too costly to survive.

## REFERENCES

- Andaloro, M., and S. Romano. 2006. *La pittura medievale a Roma 312–1431: Corpus e Atlante* (Milan).
- Andreescu-Treadgold, I. 2013. "The Mosaics of Venice and the Venetian Lagoon: Thirty-five Years of Research at Torcello (I)." *Arte Medievale* 3: 200–4.
- Bacci, M. 2015. "Old Restorations and New Discoveries in the Nativity Church, Bethlehem." *Convivium, Seminarium Kondakovianum* n.s. 2 (2): 6–59.
- Bakirtzis, C., et. al 2012. *Mosaics of Thessaloniki: 4th to 14th Century* (Athens).
- Boschetti, C., et. al 2012. "The Earliest Wall Mosaics and the Origin of Roman Glass in Italy: Archaeological Considerations for an Archaeometric Survey." In *Annales du 18 Congrès d'AIHV*, edited by D. Ignatiou and A. Antonaras, 139–44 (Thessaloniki).
- Bowes, K., and J. Mitchell. 2009. "The Main Chapel of the Durrës Amphitheatre." *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'école française de Rome, antiquité* 121, 2: 571–97.
- Cormack, R. 1981. "Interpreting the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul." *AH* 4: 131–49.
- Creswell, K. A. C. 1969. *Early Muslim Architecture. Vol. 1, Umayyads A.D. 622–750; with a Contribution on the Mosaics of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and of the Great Mosque in Damascus by Marguerite Gautier-van Berchem*. 2nd ed. (Oxford).

- Deliyannis, D. M. 2010. *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge).
- Demus, O. 1948. *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration* (Oxford).
- Demus, O. 1949. *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London).
- Demus, O. 1984. *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice* (Chicago).
- Flood, F. B. 2001. *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden)
- Flood, F. B. 2012. "Faith, Religion and the Material Culture of Early Islam." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 244–57.
- Freestone, I. C. 2006. "Glass Production in Late Antiquity and the Early Islamic Period: A Geochemical Perspective." In *Geomaterials in Cultural Heritage*, edited by M. Maggetti and B. Messiga, 201–16 (London).
- Gautier-van Berchem, M. 1969. "The Mosaics of the Dome of the Rock and of the Great Mosque in Damascus." In K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 213–322 (Oxford).
- Gibb, H. A. R. 1958. "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate." *DOP* 12: 219–34.
- Grabar, O. 2006. *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA).
- Greenhalgh, M. 2008. "Islamic Re-use of Antique Mosaic Tesserae." *Journal of Mosaic Research* 1–2: 55–81
- Harding, C. 1989. "The Production of Medieval Mosaics: The Orvieto Evidence." *DOP* 43: 73–102.
- Henderson, J., et. al 2005. "Experiment and Innovation: Early Islamic Industry at al-Raqqa, Syria." *Antiquity* 79: 130–45.
- James, L. 1996. *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford).
- James, L. 2006. L. "Byzantine Glass Mosaic Tesserae: Some Material Considerations." *BMGS* 30 (1): 29–47.
- James, L. 2017. *Mosaics in the Medieval World: From Late Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge).
- Johnson, M. J. 2009. *The Roman Imperial Mausoleum in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge).
- Kitzinger, E. 1949. "The Mosaics of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo: An Essay on the Choice and Arrangement of Subjects." *AB* 31: 269–92.
- Kitzinger, E. 1990. *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo* (Washington, DC).
- Mango, C and E. J. W. Hawkins. 1965. "The Apse Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. Report on Work carried out in 1964." *DOP* 19: 115–51.
- Mango, C and E. J. W. Hawkins. 1972. "The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. The Church Fathers in the North Tympanum." *DOP* 26: 3–41.
- Mathews, T. F. 1988. "The Sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine Church Decoration." *Perkins Journal* 41: 11–21.
- Megaw, A. H. S., and E. J. W. Hawkins. 1977. *The Church of the Panaghia Kanakaria at Lythrakomi in Cyprus: Its Mosaics and Frescoes* (Washington, DC).
- Mouriki, D. 1985. *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios* (Athens).
- Nasrallah, L. 2005. "Empire and Apocalypse in Thessaloniki: Interpreting the Early Christian Rotunda." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13: 465–508.
- Neri, E., et. al 2016. "Glass and Gold: Analyses of 4th–12th Centuries Levantine Mosaic Tesserae. A Contribution to Technological and Chronological Knowledge." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 70: 158–71.
- Schibille, N. 2014. *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience* (Farnham).

Sear, F. B. 1977. *Roman Wall and Vault Mosaics* (Heidelberg).

Terry, A., and H. Maguire. 2007. *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (University Park, PA).

Winfield, D. 2005. *Byzantine Mosaic Work: Notes on History, Technique and Colour* (Lefkosia).

## CHAPTER 26

---

# MONUMENTAL PAINTING: PRE-ICONOCLASM

---

ELIZABETH S. BOLMAN

WALLS and other architectural elements, such as ceilings, columns, capitals, and pediments, were commonly painted in the Early Byzantine period (ca. fourth–eighth century). The long-standing decorative traditions of earlier centuries were continued, but also modified. The best surviving examples come from domestic, monastic, and funerary contexts, but buildings of all types could have included painted decoration, and most probably did. Despite massive losses, significant remains still exist from both the western and eastern Mediterranean, and the corpus continues to increase thanks to archaeological excavation and conservation. The majority are from Christian contexts, although numerous pagan examples have also been preserved or at least documented, dating to the earlier centuries. As is typical for the Early Byzantine period in many media, very little painting survives in Constantinople apart from architecture. The largest body of evidence from the capital comes from painted tombs, although a painted cross dated by its excavators to the seventh century was found in part of the imperial palace (Firatlı 1966; Deckers and Serdaroglu 1995; Denker, Baran-Çelik, and Kongaz 2011, 23).

By far the largest number of surviving paintings is found in Egypt, due to its dry climate. While Egypt has traditionally been seen as a place apart, separate from the rest of the empire, recent historical and art historical scholarship demonstrates unequivocally that the province was a full participant in the empire in the Early Byzantine period. Consequently, the well-preserved body of Egyptian material is probably, generally speaking, representative of what has been lost elsewhere. It must be emphasized that the paintings in Egypt that are under discussion are not “Coptic,” a term derived from the Arabic word for “Egyptian” (*qibt*), which post-dates the Arab Conquest of the mid-seventh century and accurately describes the medieval (and later) culture of Arabized Christian Egyptians. The use of the term Coptic for the Early Byzantine period suggests a false separation of this province from the rest of the Mediterranean region, and should be avoided.



Paintings were not simply decoration; they had social agency. While less expensive than marble and mosaic, architectural polychromy in any medium was a sign of distinction. Paintings, whether figural or ornamental, helped assert social status. People also used figural representations for a host of other purposes. They could convey *paideia* (traditional Greek cultural and educational upbringing) by depicting Homeric narratives, or forge genealogical relationships between biologically unrelated individuals, such as Old Testament prophets and monastic leaders. Images of saints, angels, and Christ constitute the largest body of surviving figural subjects. Holy figures represented on walls and columns could serve a protective role, act as a focus for emulation, and show spiritual realities. Painted interiors also created an appropriately distinguished environment for ritual events. Painted tombs not only commemorated and expressed respect for the deceased, but their decoration might also represent and even conjure the paradisaical afterlife the dead hoped to enjoy. The common inclusion of flora and fauna in both Christian and pagan tombs strongly suggests such a function.

Methods for organizing painted wall decoration were widespread, and can be found in tombs, churches, and houses. A flexible decorum existed with respect to the zones of a wall, according to which the lowest register was typically painted with either illusory marble paneling (often including pilasters framing individual panels) or curtains, topped by figural subjects. These latter usually took up a much larger percentage of the wall. Both ornament and figural scenes could be circumscribed and emphasized with painted frames. A basic hierarchy existed in which figural scenes, particularly those in church and chapel apses, were the principal focal points. This convention, no doubt, was governed by the greater ritual and visual importance of sanctuaries and by sight lines within churches. The privileging of representational subjects over ornamental ones corresponded to a two-tiered payment for artists, to be discussed below.

The relationship between the function and decoration of interior spaces is often complicated. The uses and embellishment of rooms could change over time. In this essay, only monuments for which a clear context and purpose can be discerned are discussed (e.g., tombs, work areas, and church sanctuaries). Vitruvius saw decoration as an essential component in completing architecture, and had very clear ideas about what was and was not appropriate. Decorum was thus an important factor in the choice, location, and character of paintings. We should not overlook the fact that elite interiors included much more than painted walls. Textiles, floor mosaics, rich furnishings, and other media enhanced the dazzling, polychromed walls with additional hues and effects of luminosity. They combined to express an aesthetic preference for variety, called the jeweled style, which is characteristic of the period (Roberts 1989; Bolman 2016b).

Decorative features found in wall painting were by no means exclusive to the medium. Wall paintings and mosaics often shared iconography and ornamental patterns (see chapter by James in this volume). Some of the same figures and motifs can also be found in portable works of art, such as textiles, so painting should not be considered as an isolated category of art (see Woodfin chapter, this volume). The sixth-century depictions of Moses receiving the law and Moses with the Burning Bush painted in the Red Monastery church, Upper Egypt, for example, are remarkably consistent with

mosaic depictions of the same subjects in San Vitale, Ravenna, and the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. One ornamental example common in painting and mosaic is the inhabited lattice. It was produced in paint in the vaults of the late fourth-century Terrace House 1 at Ephesus (south room 2) and in the sixth-century chapel in the walls of the Monastery of St. Catherine, as well as in the mosaics at Hagios Georgios, Thessaloniki.

The painting of large interiors was a massive and expensive production, involving numerous people. It required expert coordination and substantial materials and scaffolding. Smaller structures, such as monastic oratories or cells, could also be painted, and these required considerably less investment of time, equipment, and funds. Highly skilled and also self-taught artists worked in these more modest interiors. While regional styles likely existed, they are difficult to discern given the state of the surviving evidence. The situation is complicated by the fact that quality needs to be considered as an important factor. Less skilled visual production is not necessarily representative of a provincial style; it may simply indicate that someone with limited training or ability created the work in question. Preferences, where discernable, rarely suggest a clear and consistent shift from illusionism to stylization. Sta. Maria Antiqua in Rome is an excellent example of this point, with the various phases of painting alternating between stylized and illusionistic (Andaloro, Bordi, and Morganti 2016).

While there were surely regional styles to some extent, the extensive movement of people and objects in the Early Byzantine period meant that there was a shared body of iconographic and stylistic options available to people from one end of the empire to the other. This commonality does not flatten difference. Both the deployment of styles and subjects and their reception should be evaluated in specific historical contexts.

The technique of painting on damp plaster (*fresco*) was common everywhere except Egypt, where painting on dry plaster (*secco*) was practiced, presumably due to the arid climate. Artists throughout the empire made their own pigments from a wide range of materials such as ocher, hematite, jarosite, white lead, and Egyptian blue (calcium copper silicate). In Egypt, they applied pigments in molten wax (encaustic) or with a binding agent usually of animal protein (tempera). The standard practice was to start work in the highest zones of a building and progress downwards, to avoid dripping on completed decoration. Evidence, however, indicates that this method was not always followed. Preparatory methods were often very simple. Guide lines were usually made with the *battitura di filo* technique, which involves stretching a string soaked in pigment across a wall and plucking it, to create a straight line. Compasses used to inscribe circles on plaster surfaces could be made of materials as rudimentary as a nail and string. Cost is often asserted as the determining element in choosing painting over more expensive decoration, such as mosaic or inlaid marble, and in some cases this was surely true. However, the situation in monumental Early Byzantine interiors was not always that simple. Paint could be added to an interior that was also decorated with mosaic and marble to achieve the highly esteemed aesthetic goal of increased variety. Paint could be applied to three-dimensional elements such as stone columns and raised stucco, as in the Orthodox Baptistery, Ravenna (see Brooks chapter, this volume), or on the elaborate architectural sculpture at the Red Monastery church, Upper Egypt (Figure 26.1/Color Plate 14).



FIGURE 26.1 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 14). Red Monastery Church, view of triconch sanctuary looking upwards toward the east, Sohag, Egypt, secco and encaustic painting, ca. late fifth–sixth century. © American Research Center in Egypt. Photo: A. Vescovo.

Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices (301 CE) distinguishes between two types of painters: creators of figural scenes (*pictori imaginario*), who received 150 *denarii* a day, and those responsible for "walls," presumably backgrounds and ornament (*pictori parietario*), who were paid half that amount. Clearly, a hierarchy existed. While some scholars assume the existence of stable workshops made up of these two types of painters, we should be cautious about doing so. Evidence from the Imperial period villas of Pompeii and Herculaneum suggests that creators of images were hired independently of ornamental painters (Leach 2004, 238–41).

This model probably continued throughout the Early Byzantine period. Given that a large percentage of buildings of elite status would have been painted everywhere in the empire, a considerable pool of skilled painters must have existed from which to draw from as needed. Local painters would probably have been responsible for the division of the surface area of the walls, as well as the application of ornament. The more expensive figural painters, on the other hand, were more highly valued and consequently probably traveled longer distances. They would have added their anthropomorphic scenes whenever their schedule allowed. That said, at the Red Monastery church, in the second phase of painting (sixth century), both groups were clearly working together on the scaffolding. Further complicating the question of who painted walls, it is worth at least considering the idea that the same artists also produced icons and other portable objects. Thus,

traditional scholarly isolation of different media may limit our perspective on historical creative production.

Chorikios of Gaza (d. 518), a Christian rhetorician, remarked that those who might be embarrassed by the large quantity of gold and marble in the interior of the Church of St. Stephen in his native city could seek relief in the simple stones and masonry on the outside of the building (*ArtByzEmp*, 71–72). What little survives of Early Byzantine architecture suggests that his observation was probably true of most building exteriors. Nevertheless, earlier Roman tomb buildings at Hermopolis Magna in Egypt still have thick applications of stucco shaped and painted to resemble dressed white stone. Watercolor documentation records illusionistically painted scenes, such as a lion attacking a deer, framed and embellished with garlands on the outside of another mortuary building (Gabra 1954, pls. 19–20). Given the almost complete absence of evidence, we simply cannot say whether this practice of using figural subjects or painting *trompe l'oeil* masonry continued for Early Byzantine exterior decoration. Nevertheless, the outside of the White Monastery church in Upper Egypt has traces of plaster painted with imitation stone blocks. Although not certainly from the original mid-fifth-century construction of the church, a similar use of painted plaster representing dressed stone was also employed at the neighboring Red Monastery church during the first phase of painting (late fifth century), albeit on the interior façade wall of the sanctuary.

A surprisingly large body of painted tombs has survived, dating through at least the fifth century. One of the most impressive was found in Iznik, Turkey (Fıratlı 1974). Assigned to the middle of the fourth century, it conforms to a relatively standard type of *hypogeum* (“underground” tomb) found in various sizes, which sometimes included an antechamber. The Iznik paintings completely fill the barrel-vaulted space. Scenes of birds and lush foliage set within clearly defined fields alternate with imitation *opus sectile*. The vault is decorated with a grid filled with flowers and leaves, and separated from the walls with a horizontal panel of illusory modillions. Only the two six-armed gemmed crosses indicate that this tomb was for a Christian. A group of painted tombs found in Sardis, made for both pagans and Christians, have very similar subjects: flowers, peacocks and other birds, fruit baskets, garlands, and imitation inlaid marble panels. One of these, the Tomb of Chrysanthios, dated to the fourth century, can be identified as Christian solely by an inscription (Rousseau 2010, 179–83) (Figure 26.2).

An underground painted tomb made for the Egyptian abbot and saint Shenoute, who died in 465, survives at the White Monastery, in Upper Egypt. It includes a small narthex with a shallow dome followed by a barrel-vaulted tomb. Both are completely painted, excluding only the floors. The subject matter includes gemmed crosses, peacocks, eagles and other birds, gazelle, deer, sheep, rosettes, and *trompe l'oeil* marble panels. The saint himself is also represented, with an identifying inscription. He is accompanied by remnants of one angel, but the composition almost certainly would originally have included two (Bolman, Davis, Pyke, et. al 2010). While most of the extant painted tombs are underground, a rare above-ground cemetery at Bagawat in the Kharga Oasis, Egypt, includes a number of small chapels with paintings. The two best preserved are Christian (Exodos Chapel, Chapel of Peace), but pagan depictions also exist. The Christian

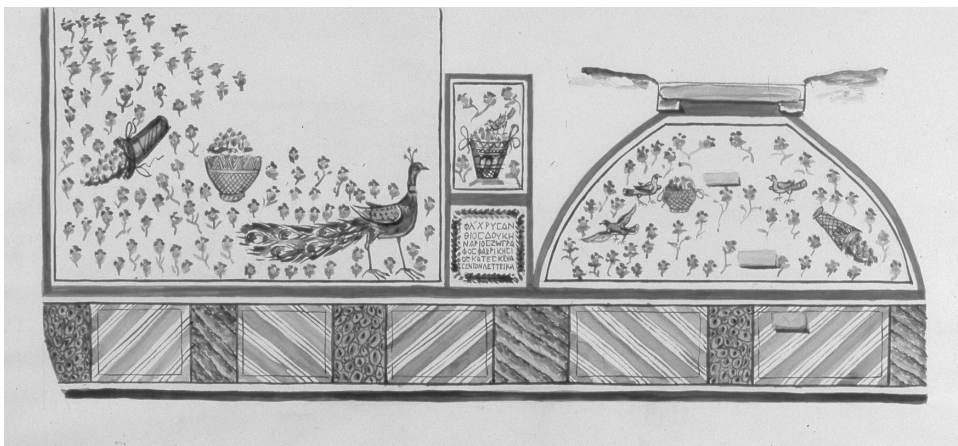


FIGURE 26.2. Tomb of Chrysanthios, watercolor documentation of the paintings of birds, flowers, and imitation marble paneling, Sardis, Turkey, ca. fourth century. © Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/President and Fellows of Harvard College. Artist: L. J. Majewski.

iconography there has close parallels to many subjects shown in the catacombs in Rome (Zibawi 2005). Other impressive examples with many recurring features have been found in Thessaloniki (e.g. the Tomb of Eustorgia, commonly misidentified as Eustorgius) and elsewhere in Greece. Other painted tombs are preserved in Bulgaria (Silistra and Serdica), Egypt (Antinoupolis), Israel (Ascalon), and Romania (Constanta-Tomis), among other places (Valeva 2001). The numerous similarities between these monuments, to a large extent irrespective of the religion of the deceased, demonstrate the interconnectedness of the empire in the Early Byzantine period.

Some of the best preserved domestic paintings are in Ephesus and in the Western Desert of Egypt. Those in Ephesus date between the fourth and fifth or sixth century (Zimmermann and Ladstätter 2011). The earliest are characterized by the widely popular imitation luxury stone panels common in non-domestic contexts as well. The Odeion-Terrace House, dating to the first half of the fourth century, displays *trompe l'oeil* marbles, and also a painting with a banqueting scene, as well as depictions of two servants, one carrying a glass and the other a tray of figs and a fowl. These two attendants are paralleled in funerary contexts, most notably in the tomb at Silistra. Some of the later domestic examples at Ephesus include restrained white walls with red framed borders, surrounding crosses. Evidence of fourth-century wall paintings has been found in numerous houses at Trimithis (Amheida), in the Dakhla Oasis of Egypt. The most elaborate known to date is in the central reception room of a villa associated with a man named Serenos, who was probably a local official (House B1, R1, Area 2.1). The room was originally covered by a painted mud-brick dome, the collapse of which destroyed about half of the paintings (Figure 26.3). The best preserved walls are decorated with several colorful geometric patterns up to about the height of two meters. Above this is a section consisting of numerous mythological subjects organized in one or two registers. These



**FIGURE 26.3.** House of Serenos, general view showing ornamental panels and mythological figural scenes, Trimithis (Amheida), Dakhla Oasis, Egypt, secco painting, ca. fourth century. © Excavations at Amheida. Photo: E. S. Bolman.

include Perseus rescuing Andromeda, Odysseus recognized by Eurykleia, the adultery of Aphrodite and Ares, and Orpheus playing his lyre. Of particular interest is a depiction of “Polis” (City), very likely the personification of Trimithis, which was elevated to the rank of a polis around 304 CE. This event provides a *terminus post quem* for the paintings. The mythological subjects indicate that paideia remained important to the fourth-century owner of the villa as a means of expressing his identity. Stylistically, the scenes are densely packed with lively figures set within stage-like architectural settings or rudimentary landscapes. The figures are treated in a casual but illusionistic manner, with color and value suggesting three-dimensionality (McFadden 2015).

Places of work, ranging from grand to modest, could also be painted. The administrative seat of a proconsul or bishop at Ephesus, now called the “Byzantine Palace,” includes some remains of early fifth-century paintings. They comprise imitation marble panels and illusory painted columns on bases. While very little has been discovered from sixth-century Alexandria, a fragmentary secco painting of the Virgin and Christ Child with at least one angel and a smaller figure, perhaps a donor, was found in the large central hallway of what seems to have been a multistory building devoted—at least on the ground floor—to making crafts of various types (Kom al-Dikka, House D). The image was positioned in the center of the north wall, with brackets for lamps on either side. The axial positioning and the presumed lamps suggest ritual activity. Archaeological evidence makes it clear that the painting predated the seventh century. Its excavators suggest a range between 500–550 CE (Rodziewicz 1984, 66–73, 194–206, 234). Slightly later, in Ephesus, a ruined building was renovated to create a marble workshop, complete with four water wheels and a stone saw. As part of the remodeling, the walls were painted white with red borders and green garlands. The remnants are too fragmentary to say if the wall scheme was more elaborate. These traces of modest decoration are very significant in that they attest to the ubiquity of painted plaster in far more than homes, elite tombs, and monumental interiors.

The largest body of surviving wall paintings comes from cultic contexts, mostly Christian. Paintings at monastic sites in Egypt are particularly well preserved, because of their locations in or on the edge of the desert. The earliest example from our period, however, is pagan. The Imperial Cult Chamber at Luxor Temple (ca. 297–302 CE) is a very rare example of the fresco technique being used in Egypt. Presumably this is because its artists were part of the military or imperial court, and had learned their craft in a place where fresco painting was the norm. The walls are divided into registers. The lowest includes trompe l’oeil opus sectile arranged in varying patterns, above which are figural scenes. The four tetrarchs (co-emperors) stand in a large niche in the south wall, robed in purple, below an eagle holding a wreath. The best preserved section of the paintings, at the eastern end of the south wall, shows a group of standing dignitaries. The three-dimensionality of the figures is rendered by the depiction of light and shadow rather than by using outlines. The arrangement of the group flanking the tetrarchs is formal, countering the stylistic illusionism of the subjects’ faces and bodies. Greater movement and increased naturalism appear to have existed on the side walls, presumably because they were less important hierarchically (Jones and McFadden 2015).

In Ephesus, four phases of painting were found in the Grotto of St. Paul, dating from the fourth century onwards. One of the best preserved depicts the rare scene of St. Thekla listening to St. Paul’s sermon from her window, having been forbidden to leave the house to attend the event (Figure 26.4). This narrative is also known from the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thekla. The addition of Thekla’s mother, Theoclia, probably makes this image unique in the extant corpus. Stylistically, the artist depended much more on outlines to circumscribe the subjects than is apparent in the Luxor Temple figures. The painting dates to the late fourth or early fifth century. Traces of a donor



FIGURE 26.4. St. Thekla Hearing St. Paul's Sermon, Grotto of St. Paul, Ephesus, Turkey, fresco painting, ca. fifth century. © Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften/Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut. Photo: N. Gail.

inscription suggest that this image may have been a special commission, and not part of a larger program of painting.

Sta. Maria Antiqua, in the Forum Romanum, is one of the most famous of Early Byzantine churches. Eight phases of painting, much of it with Christian figural subjects, have been identified. The building was not purpose-built as a church, but was adapted for Christian cultic use in the fifth century. It has one of the richest and best preserved ensembles of wall paintings in the Mediterranean region. The representations of frontal saints and narrative scenes are generally consistent iconographically and stylistically with those found elsewhere. The church also features excellent examples of figural subjects on columns and painted curtains that run along the bottom of the walls. The so-called palimpsest wall in the sanctuary (eastern wall, on the south side of the apse) and surrounding areas illustrate the stylistic complexity of Early Byzantine painting. The different phases show distinct fluctuations between stylized (phase 3, first half of the sixth century), very illusionistic (phase 5, end of the sixth century), and both modes as part of a single phase: saints with some outlining and exceptionally naturalistic angels (phase 8, 705–707 CE). This remarkable stylistic sequence demonstrates unequivocally that there was no consistent, monolithic movement from the illusionistic use of modeling to more schematized representations with bold outlines in the Early Byzantine period.



Equally important as Sta. Maria Antiqua for our understanding of Early Byzantine wall paintings is the church at the Red Monastery (Bolman 2016a). The triconch sanctuary and its façade wall comprise the best preserved monumental interior with painted architectural polychromy still largely intact from the Early Byzantine Empire. Nor has anything comparable survived from ancient Greece and Rome. Three major and one minor phases of painting have been identified, created between the late fifth and sixth century. They are all applied on dry plaster, in both tempera and encaustic. Imitation opus sectile (north and south lobes) and curtains (east lobe) fill the lowest zones in the triconch. Most of the figural subjects belong to the second and third phases of work. They both confirm the integration of this part of Egypt with the rest of the Mediterranean in their subject matter (e.g., Moses scenes paralleled at Sinai and Ravenna) and contribute new iconographic subjects (e.g., Christ in the Burning Bush, a flying angel holding a paten with Eucharistic implements). The styles of the various phases differ considerably from each other. The only partially discernable area of first-phase painting (late fifth century) is in the eastern semidome. The majority of what can be seen is the underpainting, not the final paint layer. A few hands are apparent, the most skilled of which used a pronounced illusionistic style. The second-phase painters (sixth century) employed outlines but also used shading to suggest folds in clothing and the contours of a face. The edges of the painted fields and lines are not precise, but the overall effect is compelling. The riotous ornamental painting in the triconch, characterized by bright pink and green encaustic, belongs to this phase. Most of the now visible figural paintings in the triconch are by third-phase artists (sixth century). Their palette is unique, with lavender, apricot, and also more traditional hues such as burgundy, yellowish-beige and orange. Stylistically, these depictions stand apart with their precise, dark outlines and delicately modeled faces. In the third phase of painting, the existence of three apses (as opposed to only one, as found in most churches) allowed the monastic designer of the iconographic program to convey a sophisticated theological message. The enormous semidomes tell the story of the Christian Divine Economy (God's plan for human salvation through Jesus' sacrifice), with Christ as God beyond space and time in the eastern apse, Christ incarnate in the northern apse (the Christ Child nursed by the Virgin Mary flanked by four Old Testament prophets), and Christ as the Logos in the southern apse (an enthroned Christ with four evangelists).

The impressive *secco* paintings (tempera and encaustic) in the Church of the Virgin in the Syrian Monastery, Wadi al-Natrun (Scetis) in Lower Egypt, are another remarkable survival, which spans at least five centuries (ca. 650–1225). Conservation work has been ongoing since 1995, and as of 2017 new paintings are still being uncovered. The church originally had a triconch sanctuary, but the eastern lobe was destroyed as part of a ca. seventh-century renovation. There are at least two phases of Early Byzantine painting. The first features crosses framed by wreaths, sometimes accompanied by peacocks. Soon afterwards, the monks added a more ambitious iconographic program. This second phase may have been painted in different stages from the seventh to possibly as late as the ninth century. A painted *dado* featuring trompe l'oeil architectural elements fills the lower walls. Above these are saints in various postures, comprising

equestrian martyrs, doctor saints, and patriarchs. Other images painted on columns include a standing military martyr and the Virgin Mary nursing the Christ Child. By far the most sophisticated of the paintings from this second phase are in the semidome of the western nave and the northern semidome of the original sanctuary. They depict the Annunciation (west) and the Adoration of the Magi and Shepherds (north). The painters employed luminous colors, robust illusionism, and skilled stylization. The combination of hieratic compositions with restless and expressive secondary figures is particularly striking (Innemée 1995; Innemée and van Rompay 2002). These unusual and impressive paintings are without parallels, and their dating is contested.

A small barrel-vaulted chapel built in the Justinianic walls at the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai is painted with subjects commonly found in other contexts (primarily funerary and also, as here, monastic). A jeweled cross with suspended bells fills the small apse in the eastern wall. Close parallels can be found in the monastic oratories at Kellia (Bolman 2007). The lower walls are painted with imitation marble of various colors and patterns, including book-matched panels similar to the actual cladding in the apse of the Church of St. Catherine (originally the Church of the Virgin) at Sinai. The overall effect of the illusory marble is also very much like that found in the Syrian monastery church. The vaulted ceiling is embellished with a painted lattice, inhabited with rosettes and birds.

Large numbers of paintings have been discovered in a sprawling group of monastic centers known as Kellia (“the Cells,” Lower Egypt), the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara (Lower Egypt), and the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (Middle Egypt) (Figure 26.5). Most of these were in chapels and oratories; a few survive in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, but many were documented and left to be recovered with sand or destroyed by agricultural expansion. They include a host of subjects, some iconographically unique in the extant corpus, but many quite familiar, and they demonstrate a wide array of styles and levels of competence. Perhaps the most famous example is a large painted niche from a public room in the Monastery of Apa Apollo, now in the Coptic Museum (inv. 7118). It is a two-zoned composition with Christ in Majesty above an enthroned Virgin and Child with standing apostles and local saints. The outer edge of the niche features circular medallions containing busts of the angelic virtues. While the artist had no interest in representing expansive space, the figures are individualized and robust, with coherent anatomy. Outlines and shading are used.

## CONCLUSION AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

---

Painting in the Early Byzantine period was probably the most common and least costly method for adorning buildings, both inside and out, but it was by no means always an inexpensive undertaking. Preexisting Roman traditions continued to flourish, but were also changed over time. While pagan subjects were common at the beginning of the period, by the end they had disappeared. Paintings, even those without figural subjects,



FIGURE 26.5. Christ in Majesty above an enthroned Virgin Mary and Christ Child with standing apostles and local saints, Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit, Egypt, secco and encaustic painting, ca. sixth century. © E. S. Bolman. Photo: E. S. Bolman.

indicated status. The overall picture of Early Byzantine painting as a whole, based on a consideration of subject matter, style, and architectural polychromy, is one of connectivity, not of isolated zones of production. Of course, some regional differences existed; for example, the arid climate of Egypt made secco painting the most practical choice, while fresco was the standard technique used elsewhere in the empire. The same iconographic types and ornamental patterns were used in wall painting, mosaics, textiles, and other media throughout the empire.

The most important direction for future research in Early Byzantine wall painting is an in-depth consideration of the entire corpus, examining what it tells us about generative centers of cultural production, and whether regional styles can in some cases be discerned. It has been some decades since such a project has been attempted, and many more paintings are now known. Additionally, the subject of how artists were trained, hired, and worked ideally needs more scholarly attention, although the sources may not exist to answer such questions satisfactorily. Considerable potential also exists for exploring the social agency of wall paintings in specific contexts.

## REFERENCES

- Andaloro, M., G. Bordi, and G. Morganti, eds. 2016. *Santa Maria Antiqua tra Roma e Bisanzio* (Milan).
- ArtByzEmp*.
- Bolman, E. S. 2007. "Depicting the Kingdom of Heaven: Paintings and Monastic Practice in Early Byzantine Egypt." In *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700*, edited by R. S. Bagnall, 408–33 (Cambridge).
- Bolman, E. S., ed. 2016a. *The Red Monastery Church: Beauty and Asceticism in Upper Egypt* (New Haven and Cairo).
- Bolman, E. S. 2016b. "A Staggering Spectacle: Early Byzantine Aesthetics in the Triconch." In Bolman 2016a, 117–27.
- Bolman, E. S., S. Davis, G. Pyke, et. al 2010. "Shenoute and a Newly Discovered Tomb Chapel at the White Monastery." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18, 3: 453–62.
- Deckers, J., and Ü. Serdaroglu. 1995. "Das Hypogäum beim Silivri-Kapi in Istanbul." *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20, 2: 674–81, pls. 85–86.
- Denker, A., G. Baran-Çelik, and G. Kongaz. 2011. *Byzantine Palaces in Istanbul* (Istanbul).
- Firatli, N. 1966. "Notes sur quelques hypogées paleo-chrétiens de Constantinople." In *Tortulae: Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten*, edited by W. N. Schumacher, 131–39, pls. 32–35 (Rome).
- Firatli, N. 1974. "An Early Byzantine Hypogeum Discovered at Iznik." *Mélanges Mansel* 2: 919–32 (Ankara).
- Gabra, S. 1954. *Peintures à fresques et scènes peintes à Hermoupolis-Ouest (Touna el-Gebel)* (Cairo).
- Innemée, K. C. 1995. "Deir al-Sourian—the Annunciation as Part of a Cycle?" *CA* 43: 129–32.
- Innemée, K. C., and L. van Rompay. 2002. "Deir al-Surian (Egypt): New Discoveries of 2001–2002." *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 5, 2: 63–85.
- Jones, M., and S. McFadden, eds. 2015. *Art of Empire: The Roman Frescoes and Imperial Cult Chamber in Luxor Temple* (New Haven and Cairo).
- Leach, E. W. 2004. *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples* (Cambridge).
- McFadden, S. 2015. "Art on the Edge: The Late Roman Wall Paintings of Amheida Egypt." *Akten des l'Associazione Internazionale per la Pittura Murale Antica* 11: 359–70.
- Roberts, M. 1989. *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY).
- Rodziewicz, M. 1984. *Les habitations romaines tardives d'Alexandrie: à la lumière des fouilles polonaises à Kôm el-Dikka* (Warsaw).
- Rousseau, V. 2010. "Late Roman Wall Painting at Sardis." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Valeva, J. 2001. "La peinture funéraire dans les provinces orientales de l'Empire romain dans l'Antiquité Tardive." *Hortus artium medievalium: Journal of the International Research Center for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages* 7: 167–208.
- Zibawi, M. 2005. *Bagawat: Peintures paléochrétiennes d'Égypte* (Paris).
- Zimmermann N., and S. Ladstätter. 2011. *Wall Painting in Ephesos from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine Period* (Istanbul).



## CHAPTER 27

---

# MONUMENTAL PAINTING: POST-ICONOCLASM

---

SHARON E. J. GERSTEL

## INTRODUCTION

---

BYZANTIUM inherited from the ancient world the practice of covering the rough stone wall surfaces of buildings with brightly colored figural representations and ornamental designs. This form of decoration was used in both secular and ecclesiastical contexts. Visitors to Byzantine palaces and elite houses were undoubtedly impressed by the vibrant imagery that adorned the walls of vestibules and reception rooms. Those who entered a post-Iconoclastic Byzantine church must have been struck by the plethora of images—narrative sequences ringing the upper registers of the walls, life-sized portraits of saints gazing at the viewer at ground level, and ornamental patterns that were taken both from the organic world of nature and the precise order of geometry. This chapter begins with a brief examination of monumental painting in secular contexts before turning to church decoration, which is far better preserved and more intensively studied.

## MONUMENTAL PAINTING IN SECULAR STRUCTURES

---

Although little is known about the appearance of monumental painting in the palaces, public buildings, and houses of the elite in medieval Byzantium, tantalizing clues about secular decoration are found in written sources. According to a poem, the house of Leo Sikountenos in Thessaloniki was adorned with images of Old Testament heroes and

contemporary imperial victors, including the emperor Manuel I Komnenos (Antonaras 2016, 55–56). The Byzantine historian John Kinnamos disparaged the twelfth-century suburban villa of Alexios Axouch, a general of Manuel I Komnenos, which was painted with the campaigns of the sultan of Iconium rather than with more traditional scenes of ancient heroes or the emperor's achievements in war and hunting (Hunt 1984). In the thirteenth century, according to the Byzantine historian George Pachymeres, the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos commissioned paintings of his victory at Berat for the vestibule of the Blachernai Palace (*ArtByzEmp*, 246). Similarly, the palace at Trebizond is described in the fifteenth century by Bessarion as being painted with “the choir of the emperors, both those who have ruled our land and their ancestors; also painted there are the dangers our city has undergone and those who in attacking it have done so to their own detriment” (*ArtByzEmp*, 253). Heroic and martial imagery was undoubtedly favored for the walls of palaces, where the successful exploits of the emperor were considered desirable advertisements of imperial prowess. We see this practice echoed in Crusader-sponsored paintings in formerly Byzantine lands following 1204. According to the *Chronicle of the Morea*, Nicholas II de St. Omer and his wife, Mary of Antioch, commissioned a representation of the Battle of Antioch for the Great Hall of Kadmeia in Thebes (Kalopissi-Verti 2015, 373 n. 13). Scenes from the ancient destruction of Troy, a tale critical to Crusader ideology, adorned a reception hall in the Latin archbishop's hospitium in Patras, according to a travel account written by Niccolò de Martoni in 1395 (Legrand 1895, 661).

Byzantine palaces could also be decorated with more esoteric subjects. Eustathios Makrembolites' twelfth-century novel *Hysmine and Hysminias* contains a lengthy description of a garden wall painted with colorful images of four maidens, raising questions about imagery and its reception in elite settings (Chaterjee 2013). Manuel Philes, the fourteenth-century court poet, describes paintings of the virtues Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and Temperance in one room of a palace and a luxurious garden, populated by animals and birds, on the ceiling of another (*ArtByzEmp*, 247, 248).

Few traces of monumental painting have survived in the standing and excavated remains of Byzantine houses or palaces. A portion of a vault likely painted in the ninth century was discovered in excavations at the site of the Four Seasons Hotel in Istanbul (Denker 2013, 14). The white plastered wall is covered with linked octagonal compartments, like architectural coffers, each containing a gold quincunx enclosing red and blue circles. Excavation of a 10th-century house in the center of Thessaloniki brought to light paintings of a rectangular table rendered in perspective, the lower portion of a column, and the legs and feet of an approaching male figure (Figure 27.1) (Marki 1992).

Building B in the Despot's Palace at Mystras preserves traces of paint from the Late Byzantine period, including a decorative folded star pattern that, in its coloration and design, resembles paintings in the city's Pantanassa Church of ca. 1430. Recent excavations in the thirteenth-century Nymphaion, a Laskarid structure at Kemalpaşa, Turkey, have also revealed wall paintings, including ornate foliate patterns, in a section



FIGURE 27.1. Wall painting, tenth century, detached from a Middle Byzantine house excavated at the Stoa Chortiatis, Thessaloniki, Greece. Wall Painting from Stoa Chortiatis. Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

of the building that once served as a bath. These exceptional remains hint at the wealth of decoration that once covered the walls of Byzantium's secular structures, a subject that has yet to be fully explored.

## MONUMENTAL PAINTING IN ECCLESIASTICAL STRUCTURES

---

Byzantine and Byzantine-style monumental painting is preserved in hundreds of churches throughout the Mediterranean and in the Balkans. Many painted programs still remain unpublished or understudied. The geographical diffusion of the monuments demands attention to regional styles and the understanding of centers and peripheries. Questions about materials, workshops, patronage, and context come into play in most studies of these decorated buildings. In recent years, scholars have also investigated connections between painting and texts, ritual performance, and phenomenology. After decades of focusing on the figural components of church decoration, scholars are increasingly turning their attention to the sources and meaning of ornament.

### Materials

The technical study of preserved frescoes and the evidence provided by Byzantine and post-Byzantine treatises on painting illuminate the working methods of ecclesiastical painters. The Byzantines combined two techniques of applying color layers to the wall surface—*fresco buono* (fresh plaster) for the base colors and *fresco secco* (dry plaster) for details of composition. After applying a thick layer of colored lime plaster to the wall, painters most frequently worked from the upper registers of the church to the ground level; the seams between plastered sections were often disguised by decorative borders. After the wet plaster dried, the surface was polished and painters began to brush sketch



or incise the broad lines of narrative scenes or figures directly onto the wall (Winfield 1968; Kakoulli, Schilling, and Mazurek 2012). The polishing also created a desirable acoustical effect. Painters occasionally used compasses to create circular elements like haloes and straight edges to lay out the patterns on vestments such as the *polystavria*, liturgical robes covered with cross patterns that were worn by church hierarchs in the Late Byzantine period (Figure 27.2/Color Plate 13B).



FIGURE 27.2 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 13B). Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian wearing *stavrophoria*, ca. 1320. Apse of St. Nicholas Orphanos, Thessaloniki, Greece. Photo: Sharon Gerstel.

Once the wall surface was prepared and the outlines of the images established, the painter used natural pigments to fill out the figures and scenes, beginning with dark background colors, continuing with vestments, and ending with light flesh tones and inscriptions. The pigments were mixed into binding media, which could include egg, linseed or walnut oil, and animal glue. Byzantine painters were masterful in laying on colors side by side to create a rich effect; the treatment of faces shows an interest in blending tones to give the impression of modeling. In the Komnenian period, painters enlivened faces by adding splashes of deep pink to cheeks and lips. In the Late Byzantine period in Macedonia and elsewhere, deep olive undertones were used to produce a modeled effect on faces. Depending on the financial means of the donor or sponsoring community, painters could avail themselves of expensive pigments, including lapis lazuli.

Treatment of the wall surface in many regions reveals an interest in rendering figures more tactile. In later paintings, particularly in Cyprus and in parts of the Peloponnesos, relief haloes were created from plaster; these could be pseudo-gilded in imitation of metal revetments attached to icons (Frinta 1981; Kalopissi-Verti 1986). In some areas, like the Peloponnesos, thickened white paint used to adorn vestments imitated the raised threads of embroidered textiles; in one church close to Geraki, cabochons were affixed to several of the figures, imitating a technique found in Italian panel paintings (Gerstel and Kappas 2018). Despite the limitations of painting on a flat wall, Byzantine painters enlivened figures through surface treatment and used color contrasts—light figures on dark surfaces—to create an impression that painted figures were able to wrench free from their two-dimensional confines.

Byzantine painters also exploited the shape of the church to enliven painted figures. Two-dimensional paintings were shaped by the curved surfaces of domes, squinches, pendentives, and vaults to enfold the faithful standing below them (Demus [1948] 1976, 30–35). The painters frequently paired figures on opposing surfaces—flanking doors, windows, or the opening of the sanctuary—in order to engage with one another across the intervening space through pose, gesture, gaze, or linked inscriptions. In some churches, like the twelfth-century Panagia tou Arakos near Lagoudera, Cyprus (Nicolaidès 1996), painted figures are rendered stepping across frames as if to pass into human space. All of these techniques were used to create an impression that the church was a site of transformation where figures of spirit and flesh stood together before God in eternal, common supplication, prayer, and response. Monumental painting, therefore, fostered notions of the church as a transtemporal zone, a space that participated in both liturgical and human time.

The walls of many churches are covered with multiple layers of paint, either through the addition of new images of import to communities, or through the application of new layers that were intended to repair or update preexisting frescoes. In order for a new layer of plaster to adhere to a previously painted wall, holes had to be gouged into the older layer to roughen the surface. On occasion, the copying of older dedicatory inscriptions onto later layers has caused confusion in dating phases of painting, a phenomenon that has yet to be fully explored. Damage to figures of saints—usually scraping

fragments of their eyes—also points to a common belief in the efficacious use of bits of plaster icons in folk cures. Damage to church painting, however, can also indicate intentional effacement for political or religious reasons.

Within the church, monumental painting was frequently complemented by other media, including stone and wood carving (see Brooks chapter, this volume). In the tenth- and eleventh-century churches of Constantinople and its hinterlands, painting shared the wall surface with architectural revetment tiles decorated with ornamental patterns and figures (Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001; see Figure 8.3). In several churches in Turkey and Greece from the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, such as Hosios Loukas, Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki, and the Chora *katholikon* (Kariye Camii) in Constantinople, monumental painting and mosaics were used in the same building. In others, for example at the Church of the Ascension in the Mileševa Monastery, Serbia, painted in the 1230s, the gold-leaf background was subdivided by thin lines to imitate mosaic tesserae (Radojčić 1967). In many buildings painting was coupled with molded plaster (Papadopoulou 2001 [2006]), a subject that is still being explored. In turn, painters used monumental decoration to evoke other media. Portraits of saints could be framed and suspended from fictive hooks in imitation of painted icons (Gerstel 1999, 18, 23) and icon frames could be painted to resemble sculpted stone or molded plaster *proskynētaría* (Kalopissi-Verti 2007, 113).

Visitors to Byzantine churches often comment on the consistency in the representation of saints and narrative scenes. Surviving painters' instructions and cartoons from the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period indicate that some workshops used guides to follow artistic precedents (Chatzidakis 1938; Hetherington 1974; Vassilaki 2001; Parpulov, Dolgikh, and Cowe 2010); others were likely inspired by the study of neighboring monuments or through apprenticeship with an established painter.

## Painters and Workshops

The geographical range of decorated churches raises important questions about painters and workshops. Although the surviving churches of Constantinople display some of the finest Byzantine monumental decoration preserved, little is known about the painters and workshops that operated in the city. The twelfth-century painter Eulalios is named in the writings of Nikolaos Mesarites and Nikephoros Kallistos. Of the artist's depiction of Christ, Kallistos writes: "Either Christ himself came down from heaven and showed the exact traits of His face to him who has such eloquent hands, or else the famous Eulalios mounted up to the very skies to paint with his skilled hand Christ's exact appearance" (*ArtByzEmp*, 231–32). At the behest of Prince Dadian Vameq I (1384–1396), Manuel Eugenikos traveled from Constantinople to Georgia to paint the church of Calendžicha (Velmans 1988). Theophanes the Greek was active in Constantinople before moving to Novgorod in 1370 and to Moscow in 1395 (Astakhov 2016).

More information is known about painters and workshops in Byzantium's second city, Thessaloniki, particularly for the Late Byzantine period. Eutybios and Michael Astrapas, Georgios Kallierges, Michael Proeleusis, and the painter identified as Manuel

Panselinos (Milliner 2012), all from Thessaloniki, worked on churches, icons, and perhaps even designed cartoons for embroideries (Babić 1981; Tsigaridas 2003; Marković 2010; Tsigaridas 2010; Antonaras and Gerstel 2016, 95–109). Several of these painters are associated with church decoration and icons on Mt. Athos, the monastic enclave that likely exerted a strong influence on the theological content of their work. In addition to working on the Holy Mountain and in Thessaloniki, Michael Astrapas and Eutychios are linked to churches in Serbia, as evidenced by their unusual signatures, painted monograms, and characteristic style. Other painters in the Balkans included Ioannes, whose name is associated with the paintings of St. Demetrios in the Patriarchal Monastery at Peć of ca. 1345 (Drpić 2013, 334–35), and Ioannes o Theorianos, who signed his name in ca. 1350 on the blade of a sword of an archangel painted in the narthex of Hagia Sophia in Ohrid. In the chapel of St. John the Baptist in the same church appear the names of the painters Constantine and his son, Ioannes, a deacon. Painters associated with the Morava School in Serbia include Constantine (Ravanica Church), Makarios (Ljubostinja Church), and Theodore (Rudenica Church) (Kalopissi-Verti 1994).

An abundance of information about painters comes from Byzantium's hinterlands. In small, rural churches, inscriptions provide evidence of a painter—called in Greek ζωγράφος or ιστοριογράφος—working together with his assistants, who were frequently relatives. This is the case, for example, of the brothers Nikolaos and Theodoros, who in 1265 completed the decoration of the small vaulted church of Hagioi Anargyroi in the village of Kepoula, Mani. Tracking the hands of the painters, either through inscriptions or artistic style, allows us to follow their movements across the rural landscape (Panayotidi 2005). The painters, who in many cases also held other jobs (frequently associated with the Church), worked within limited geographical areas. In Crete, for example, the painter Ioannes Pagomenos is credited with the decoration of six modest chapels, all on the western side of the island (Lymberopoulou 2010).

Church painting in Byzantium displays regional styles, which are often the subject of dedicated scholarly studies. Groups of tenth- and eleventh-century churches in Cappadocia, for example, have been assigned to specific workshops based on common style and imagery (Jolivet Lévy 2015). Churches in Kastoria of the late twelfth century have a distinctive style (Malmquist 1979). The hands of fresco painters in this town can also be traced in important icons, reminding us that painters took on a variety of commissions (Tsigaridas 1988). In the Late Byzantine period, characteristic styles are associated with the cities of Constantinople, Thessaloniki (and broader Macedonia), Mystras, and with areas like Attica and islands like Euboea and Crete (Mouriki 1978).

Frequently, Constantinople has been seen as the source of a metropolitan style that can be traced in painting in the provinces and across media (Wharton 1988). In the Komnenian period, particularly at the end of the twelfth century, the lively painting style of the Byzantine capital reached the walls of churches in Macedonia and Cyprus, and touched the surfaces of icons in the Sinai. In Late Byzantium, following a lengthy period of Latin rule, monumental painting outside of the capital turned away from exclusive dependence on Constantinople and absorbed stylistic and, occasionally iconographic, influences from other cultures. Monumental painting in Epiros, the Morea, Attica, the

Greek islands, Cyprus, and elsewhere have all been studied with a sensitivity to “foreign” elements, whether deliberately asserted or subconsciously absorbed. The study of the tension between indigenous and foreign influences extends to paintings in formerly Byzantine territories, for example, Syria (Dodd 2000; Westphalen and Schmidt 2005), Southern Italy (Safran 2014), and the Holy Land. Scholars are still problematizing how to describe monumental painting that manifests cultural negotiation; many currently eschew the term *hybrid* as an inadequate descriptor of the forms of art that emerged from regions cohabited by differing groups (Bacci 2014).

## Patronage

The study of patronage has always been at the center of Byzantine studies. Written and material sources provide ample evidence for the engagement of Byzantine men and women—both elite and humble—in church decoration. Patrons had many reasons to build churches, including as votive offerings, as sites of family or monastic worship, and as places of burial and commemoration. Motivations for church construction and decoration are often articulated in dedicatory inscriptions, but are also manifested in the selection of imagery, which is frequently of personal or familial significance. Theodore Metochites, the most intensively studied patron of the early fourteenth century, played a decisive role in the selection of mosaic and painted decoration for the Chora Monastery in Constantinople (Underwood 1966–75). Poems that he wrote about the church provide important insights into his approach to the building (Featherstone 2001). The decoration of the Thessalonian chapel of St. Euthymios in 1303, commissioned by Michael Glavas Tarchaneiotos and his wife, Maria, has been linked to the patrons’ desire to have a child (Gouma Peterson 1976, 169–70). The program of the Constantinopolitan chapel of the Pammakaristos, later commissioned by Maria, was intended to invoke salvation on behalf of Tarchaneiotos, who was buried within its walls (Belting, Mango, and Mouriki 1978). The large number of painted churches commissioned by Stefan Uroš II Milutin, king of Serbia (r. 1282–1321) has received a great deal of attention from scholars (Todić 1999). Recent studies of churches in Arta and Trebizond have also focused on the role of patrons in shaping subject matter and asserting imperial connections (Eastmond 2004; Parani 2016).

Many churches, particularly in the Late Byzantine period, were constructed and decorated by members of the local elite, but also by more humble donors. Portraits of donors and supplicants are common in the Late Byzantine period, as is the inscription of dedicatory prayers written on behalf of individuals, families, and communities (Kalopissi-Verti 1992). In recent years, scholars have used these portraits, inscriptions, and commissioned imagery as a source for economic and social history (Gerstel 2015b). This approach is particularly fruitful for the study of rural churches.

The clergy was also deeply invested in ecclesiastical decoration. The early fourteenth-century church of Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki is linked to the Patriarch Niphon. The paintings in the church ambulatory, completed under the abbot Paul, show an

awareness of artistic styles and imagery from both Constantinople and Thessaloniki. By representing imperial chrysobulls in a chapel of the *katholikon*, the Abbot Pachomius, who was responsible for the decoration of the *Hodēgētria* Church in Mystras in ca. 1320, asserted his monastery's connection to the capital (Gerstel 2013). At a more humble level, village priests commissioned the decoration of local churches, occasionally having themselves represented as supplicants. Evidence also survives for the involvement of nuns in church construction and decoration.

## Painting and Texts

The intersection of text and image has engaged the attention of a number of scholars studying monumental painting. The deep logocentrism of Byzantine culture affected the decoration of many churches, particularly those in urban settings or those painted for elite monastic communities. Narrative sequences are read from left to right, paralleling the reading of Greek texts. Monumental representations of hymns, like the Christmas *troparion* “What shall we offer Thee,” often display imagery from top to bottom, left to right, suggesting that those who confronted the paintings while chanting were familiar with reading as well. An understanding of how intellectuals approached the decorated church emerges from the study of Byzantine rhetorical devices, including *ekphrasis*, *antithesis*, *lament*, and *hyperbole* (Maguire [1981] 1994; see also Maguire chapter, this volume). Rhetorical techniques at play in hymn composition would have influenced Byzantine painters in decisions about the placement of specific figures and scenes.

An acknowledgment of the practice and purpose of writing can also be witnessed in monumental painting. Within the church, texts work in tandem with paintings, from the simple labeling of images of saints following the termination of Iconoclasm, to the inscription of long prayers or dedications throughout the building. Writing—most often captured on scrolls—gives voice to the painted figures and often reinforces meanings otherwise conveyed by pose and gesture. In the monastic church of the Virgin *Peribleptos*, today St. Clement, in Ohrid, the Archangel Gabriel is represented adjacent to the north entrance of the narthex holding a pen in his right hand (Figure 27.3). In his left, he grasps an unfurled scroll that reads: “Holding the fast writer’s pen in my hand, I write down the promises of those entering. I protect the ones who keep them, but those who do not I swiftly destroy” (Drpić 2016, 29). In addition to reading the text, the downward tilt of the archangel’s head, his penetrating gaze, the turn of his body with scroll extended, and the insistent positioning of his pen on the red “O” of the opening word, “fast writer’s” (Ὁξυγράφου), a Greek compound, created a message about salvation or condemnation that would have been readily understood by any literate supplicant passing through the portal. Familiarity with the craft of writing can be seen in the intentional use of crimson colored paint, as in the “O” on the archangel’s scroll.

In several Middle and Late Byzantine churches in Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia, a poignant dialogue between the Virgin and her Son is captured using alternating black

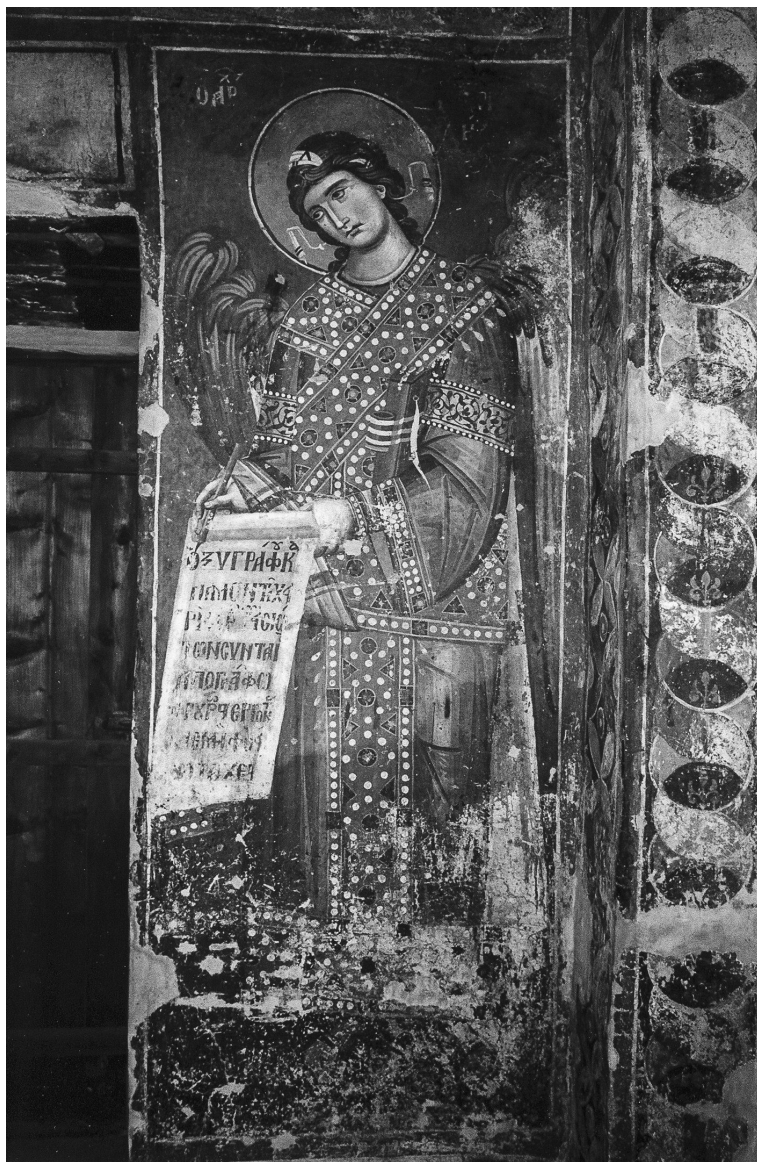


FIGURE 27.3. Archangel Gabriel, 1294/95, in the narthex of the church of the Virgin Peribleptos (today St. Clement), Ohrid, Republic of North Macedonia. Photo: Ivan Drpić.

and red paint for each voice (Djordjević and Marković 2000–2001). Like monumental painters, the scribes of Byzantine liturgical manuscripts used black ink for texts, but added red ink to indicate different functions and actors in the service (see McCombs chapter, this volume). The coloration of words in monumental painting links the written and painted texts. We can see the similar understanding of the mechanics of writing in the crimson color—imitating the carmine ink employed by the emperor—used for the

imperial signatures on the monumental chrysobulls painted in the southwest chamber of the church of the Virgin Hodêgētria in Mystras.

The painted church is a fertile source for the study of Byzantine epigrams, verse inscriptions that demonstrate the erudition of the painter and assert the agency of the patron (Rhoby 2009). The frequent use of dodecasyllables ties church inscriptions to poetic compositions outside the walls of the church. The inscriptions are carefully fitted into the painted program, either framed by bands or clustered within images. Over the nave entrance to the church of the Holy Anargyroi in Kastoria (ca. 1180), for example, the white letters of a beautiful poem are silhouetted against a green background, like blades of grass. The words surround the feet of two angels, who gesture with upstretched hands toward the Ascension in the vault above, linking text and image through their poses. The text is the supplication of the donor, Theodore Lemniotis, who restored the church in order to find “the ever-dewy grass and a place of the meek.” At the center of the inscription is a half-length image of the Virgin, whose hands are raised in an intercessory gesture. The combination of the inscribed word, where the donor asks “to find the recovery of my ailing flesh and the gift of bodily health” for himself, his wife, and children, and the imagery of ascent reveals a carefully planned program of supplication and anticipated response.

The text of the liturgy and of extralitururgical services, from prayers uttered by individual celebrants to hymns chanted by monastic communities, was a source of inscriptions and imagery throughout the building. Liturgical authors and hymnographers are frequently shown in the process of writing. In the side chapel of the Chora monastery, for example, four hymnographers are painted in the pendentives of the dome, each in the act of composing works that would be performed in a space intended for commemorative services. In most Byzantine churches following the late eleventh century, church hierarchs painted in the sanctuary carry unfurled scrolls inscribed with prayers from the liturgy—usually the subvocalized, preparatory prayers uttered by the celebrant. Within the church, authors carry the opening lines of chanted hymns, prompting memory and response in the viewer (Ševčenko 2002; Bakalova 2006). These hymns are often paired with adjacent scenes connected to the feast days on which they would be chanted or to the subject matter that inspired their composition. Hymn texts were also represented on the walls of the church without their authors, referring instead to the community that sang them. In the mid-fourteenth-century church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Mystras, Greece, a beautifully lettered inscription surrounds the Pantokratōr in the dome of the church (Figure 27.4). The text, a prayer from the feast of the Encounter celebrated on February 2, reads: “O Lord, the firm foundation of those who trust in you, confirm the Church, which you purchased with your precious blood.”

The inscription is particularly meaningful when placed in the dome since the Greek word *στρεῶμα*, “foundation,” can also be translated as “firmament,” thus linking the text to an architectural feature that was envisioned as heaven. The text that surrounds Christ Pantokratōr is a *katavasia*, a chanted verse that comes at the end of a long string of prayers like an exclamation point. As it was chanted, the two choirs, which had been positioned along the north and south walls of the church, converged in the center of the





FIGURE 27.4. Pantokrator with surrounding inscription, ca. 1360, in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos, Mystras, Greece. Photo: Sharon Gerstel.

building and stood below the dome, crowned by the very words they were chanting. Other illustrated hymns, like the *Akathistos* painted in Late Byzantine monumental cycles, are inscribed with their verses, uniting the community through the potent fusion of word and image (Spatharakis 2005).

Images, accompanied by inscriptions and evoking texts read or chanted in the church, were intended to call forth emotional responses from the faithful. Emotions such as sorrow are well represented in the faces and postures of painted figures (Maguire 1977). Fear is also an emotion named in church inscriptions—particularly in words marking the threshold of the sanctuary. Inscriptions mentioning fear and trembling are found in Greek churches of the eleventh century. The frequency of such inscriptions raises a question about how the painted text was used to arouse or mirror emotions within sacred space. An inscription of 1028 painted on the framing arch of the sanctuary of Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki, Greece, commands those “beholding” the altar to “stand trembling . . . for within, Christ is sacrificed daily, and the . . . incorporeal angels . . . circle around in fear.” Of all the figures represented in the sanctuary of this small church, only the angels display any movement, with the billowing folds of their mantles revealing their agitation. First found in a small church in Thessaloniki, the painted text is repeated in churches in Prespa close to Kastoria, Longanikos in the Peloponnesos, and elsewhere. The same text appears frequently in post-Byzantine churches—in Cyprus, on Mt. Athos, in Greek Macedonia, in Thessaly, Epiros, Mani, and the Aegean islands. Similar texts are

found in churches in Cappadocia (Sitz 2017). Texts and images within the church could forge an emotional community—a community that was bound together by feelings of fear, sorrow, joy, hope, and, in some cases, loss. Work on painting and emotions in Byzantium is a topic that has yet to be fully investigated, but one that is attracting increasing attention.

## Painting and Ritual Performance

While monumental decoration in the earliest Christian centuries drew inspiration from the text of the Gospels, the codification of Christian dogma and the charismatic power of saints, in the centuries following the termination of Iconoclasm, the text and performance of the liturgy became an increasingly important source of imagery. The belief that the church was a shared site of heavenly and earthly worship was manifested in depictions of paired liturgical celebrations that involved, on the one hand, Christ and his angelic attendants and, on the other hand, sainted concelebrants who circled around the living priest. The accurate representation of costumes, vessels, textiles, candlesticks, and other realia forged strong visual connections between liturgical rites painted on the church walls and those celebrated at the altar table. In a sense, painting guided both clergy and laity in correct liturgical performance. The clergy was given painted models of how to perform the service—prompted by the incipits of prayers painted on the walls and visualized in the sacrifice of Christ, the *melismos*, at the center of the apse. Through its mimetic qualities, the painted figures encouraged the priest who, once purified, would stand among the blessed hierarchs in concelebration. The laity, to the contrary, envisioned themselves as penitents who, like the painted figure of St. Mary of Egypt, stooped over and abject, approached her confessor for communion. The poses and gestures of the painted figures mirrored those of the living.

Paintings within the church visualize the performance of prayer and reveal the promise of response. The scene of the *Deesis*, a supplicatory prayer that culminated in St. John the Baptist and the Virgin petitioning Christ on behalf of the faithful, is found in many Middle and Late Byzantine churches, both in the apse and on the side walls. Rendered in monumental scale, the image visualized for the faithful the mechanics of prayer. In many churches, painted supplicants placed in close proximity to saints—frequently their name saints—appear to be granted salvation, as the hand of the saint rests on or close to their heads. These images of supplicants are often coupled with inscriptions that begin with the word *deesis*, “entreaty.” Often preceded by the symbol of a cross, these short invocations prompt the faithful to pray on behalf of the deceased.

In recent years a number of scholars have begun investigating how monumental painting mirrored rites associated with death and the commemoration of the deceased. The Canon for He Who Is at the Point of Death (*Kanon eis Psychorragounta*) was intended to be read and sung shortly before death. Monumental depictions of this canon found in a chapel at the top of the tower of St. George in the Chilandar Monastery on Mt. Athos and in the exonarthex of St. Sophia in Ohrid, Republic of North Macedonia,

indicate that the images served not only as the record of an important ritual, but that they also functioned in monastic and lay contemplative and penitential exercises, particularly when they were placed in proximity to ossuaries or to images of the Last Judgment (Marinis 2015). Simultaneously, scholars are investigating portraits of the deceased in Byzantine churches as a way to understand attitudes toward self-representation and memorialization.

## Painting and Phenomenology

Drawing from the field of phenomenology, recent research is investigating how painted images were experienced by looking closely at how light and sound, together with other sensual responses such as smell, connect the viewer and the sacred icon (Pentcheva 2010). New research suggests that sound—sung or vocalized—may have influenced the placement of images in resonant spaces and that developments in the chanted service may have stimulated the development of new imagery (Gerstel 2015a). The representation of sinners who are punished for chattering during the service in the Late Byzantine period suggests that the sonic environment—a space of sound and silence—was a critical component of transformation that worked in tandem with the painted program. More work remains to be done in linking Byzantine writings on psychoacoustics to church painting, a fruitful area of research in considering, for example, the decoration of the dome.

At the same time, recent research on light within the church has also begun to reveal how illumination—both natural and artificial—in concert with monumental decoration, transforms the church interior (Kotoula 2013). The importance of illumination is captured in the representation of candles, the inclusion of abbreviated inscriptions referring to enlightenment, and the creation of a rich ornamental vocabulary that may refer to light. From the twelfth century, many Byzantine and Serbian churches were decorated on the interior with small rotating discs (Schwartz 1977), an enigmatic motif that may be associated with divine light. Radiant friezes and star bursts, common in monumental painting, may have also been connected to light symbolism.

Reflections of the importance of light in monumental painting can best be seen in the developing image of the Transfiguration. In the Late Byzantine period, the mandorla of Christ in this representation is formed of increasingly complex geometrical forms that emit numerous rays. Followers of hesychasm, primarily a monastic movement, sought to participate through repetition of the Jesus prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”) in the uncreated light of the Godhead (the energy of God), the light in which Christ was transformed at Mt. Tabor in the presence of his three disciples. Byzantine painters further acknowledge the importance of light in rendering the background of paradise as white. To the contrary, the black background of hell, represented in many churches, is equated with the absence of divine illumination.

## Painting and Ornament

Scholars are increasingly turning to the study of ornament within church decoration (Figure 27.5). Ornament serves as the infrastructure that binds the church paintings together.

As the mark of the artist, ornament is frequently used to identify workshops or trace the hands of specific masters. Although much of the Byzantine ornamental vocabulary is inherited from the ancient Mediterranean world, additions to the ornamental repertoire over time are significant. In the Middle Byzantine period, for example, the introduction of pseudo-Kufic signaled an interest in and absorption of an ornamental form that reached Byzantium through trade and diplomatic exchanges. It is not surprising that this ornamental letter form is frequently used to decorate textiles and metal objects such as military equipment and vessels in monumental painting. In the Late Byzantine period, elements from the Gothic ornamental repertoire—quatrefoils, heraldic emblems, and certain foliate patterns—were incorporated into painting in Orthodox churches, largely as the result of cultural intermingling in lands formerly under imperial hegemony (Bacci 2016). Beyond the identification and classification of ornament, scholars are increasingly interested in its meaning. The recreation of an Edenic landscape through the proliferation of foliate ornament was intentional, for the church interior was meant to reintroduce humans into the paradise they had lost and to invite the holy to descend and mingle among them. Connections to light, as discussed earlier,



**FIGURE 27.5.** Foliate ornament, 1315–1321, in dome in the parekklesion of the Chora Church (Kariye Camii), Istanbul, Turkey. Photo: Sharon Gerstel.

may be detected in certain ornamental forms in church painting. Brightly colored, often in jewel tones, ornament may have evoked a sense of luxury through transmedial and transmaterial associations. Such an association would have been pleasing to church patrons, particularly members of the elite. One of the challenges to scholars working in monumental decoration is to decode what significance and meaning ornament held for the Byzantine faithful.

Monumental painting is a complex field of research in Byzantine studies. While many decorative programs have been well studied, others have not yet been published. Understanding church decoration requires an understanding of communities—those who commissioned painters and those who viewed the paintings. And, while we interpret the paintings with the eyes of the living, the Byzantine faithful were all too aware that monumental painting, once applied to the walls of the church, also had other audiences, both corporeal and spiritual.

## REFERENCES

- Antonaras, A. 2016. *Arts, Crafts and Trades in Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki: Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence* (Mainz).
- Antonaras, A., and S. E. J. Gerstel. 2016. "Between Heaven and Earth: Views of Byzantine Thessaloniki." In *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 87–111 (Turnhout). *ArtByzEmp*.
- Astakhov, A. 2016. *Feofan Grek* (Moscow).
- Babić, G. 1981. "Michel Proeleusis, un peintre de Thessalonique du debut du XIV siècle." *Zograf* 12: 4–8.
- Bacci, M. 2014. "Hybrids': Towards a Reassessment." *Studies in Iconography* 35: 73–106.
- Bacci, M. 2016. "Gothic-Framed Byzantine Icons: Italianate Ornament in the Levant during the Late Middle Ages." In *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, edited by G. Necipoğlu and A. Payne, 106–15 (Princeton).
- Bakalova, E. 2006. "Hymnography and Iconography: Images of Hymnographers in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Paintings in Bulgaria." In *Ritual and Art: Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, edited by P. Armstrong, 246–74 (London).
- Belting, H., C. Mango, and D. Mouriki. 1978. *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul* (Washington, DC).
- Chatterjee, P. 2013. "Ekphrasis, Epigrams, and Color in Hysmine and Hysminias." *DOP* 67: 209–25.
- Chatzidakis, M. 1938. "Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου." *Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 14: 393–414.
- Demus, O. [1948] 1976. *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London; reprint New Rochelle, NY).
- Denker, A. 2013. "Excavations at the Byzantine Great Palace (Palatium Magnum) in the Area of the Old Sultanahmet Jail." In *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture*, Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, edited by A. Ödekan, N. Necipoğlu, and E. Akyürek, 13–18 (Istanbul).

- Djordjević, I., and M. Marković. 2000–2001. “On the Dialogue Relationship between the Virgin and Christ in East Christian Art.” *Zograf* 28: 13–48.
- Dodd, E. 2000. *The Frescoes of Mar Musa al-Habashi: A Study in Medieval Painting in Syria* (Toronto).
- Drpić, I. 2013. “Painter as Scribe: Artistic Identity and the Arts of Graphē in Late Byzantium.” *Word & Image* 29: 334–53.
- Drpić, I. 2016. *Epigram, Art and Devotion in Late Byzantium* (Cambridge).
- Eastmond, A. 2004. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot).
- Featherstone, M. 2001. “Metochites’s Poems and the Chora.” In *The Kariye Camii Reconsidered*, Istanbul Research Institute Symposium Series 1, edited by H. Klein, R. Ousterhout, and B. Pitarakis, 197–211; 223–37 (Istanbul).
- Frinta, M. 1981. “Raised Gilded Adornment of the Cypriot Icons, and the Occurrence of the Technique in the West.” *Gesta* 20: 333–47.
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 1999. *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, CAA Monograph on the Fine Arts 56 (Seattle and London).
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 2013. “Mapping the Boundaries of Church and Village: Ecclesiastical and Rural Landscapes in the Late Byzantine Peloponnese.” In *Viewing the Morea: Land and People in the Late Medieval Peloponnese*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 334–68 (Washington, DC, and Cambridge, MA).
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 2015a. “Monastic Soundspaces: The Art and Act of Chanting.” In *Resounding Images: The Aural and Visual Arts [in Harmony], 800–1500*, edited by S. Boynton and D. J. Reilly, 135–52 (Turnhout).
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 2015b. *Rural Lives and Landscapes in Late Byzantium: Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography* (Cambridge).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and M. Kappas. 2018. “Between East and West: Locating Monumental Paintings from the Peloponnese.” In *Cross-cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West 1204–1669: Whose Mediterranean Is It Anyway?*, edited by A. Lymberopoulou, 175–202 (Abingdon).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and J. Lauffenburger. 2001. *A Lost Art Rediscovered: The Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Gouma Peterson, T. 1976. “The Parecclesion of St. Euthymios in Thessalonica: Art and Monastic Policy under Andronicos II.” *AB* 58: 168–83.
- Hetherington, P. 1974. *The “Painter’s Manual” of Dionysios of Fournā: An English Translation, with Commentary, of Cod. Gr. 709 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad* (London).
- Hunt, L. 1984. “Comnenian Aristocratic Palace Decoration: Descriptions and Islamic Connections.” In *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, edited by M. Angold, 138–56 (Oxford).
- Jolivet-Lévy, C. 2015. *La Cappadoce: Un siècle après G. de Jerphanion* (Paris).
- Kakoulli, I., M. Schilling, and J. Mazurek. 2012. “The Murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa: A Technical Examination.” In *Asinou across Time: Studies in the Architecture and Murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus*, edited by A. W. Carr and A. Nicolaïdès, 313–59 (Washington, DC).
- Kalopossi-Verti, S. 1986. “Διακοσμημένοι φωτοστέφανοι σε εικόνες και τοιχογραφίες της Κύπρου και του ελληνικού χώρου.” *Πρακτικά Β’ Διεθνούς Κυπριολογικού Συνεδρίου* 2: 555–60.

- Kalopissi-Verti, S. 1992. *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Vienna).
- Kalopissi-Verti, S. 1994. "Painters in Late Byzantine Society: The Evidence of Church Inscriptions." *CA* 42: 139–58.
- Kalopissi-Verti, S. 2007. "The Proskynetarion of the Templon and Narthex: Form, Imagery, Spatial Connections, and Reception." In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Archaeological, Liturgical and Theological Views on Religious Screens, East and West*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 107–32 (Washington, DC, and Cambridge, MA).
- Kalopissi-Verti, S. 2015. "Monumental Art in the Lordship of Athens and Thebes under Frankish and Catalan Rule (1212–1388): Latin and Greek Patronage." In *A Companion to Latin Greece*, Brill's Companions to European History 6, edited by N. Tsougarakis and P. Lock, 369–417 (Leiden).
- Kotoula, D. 2013. "'With Respect to the Lavishness of Illumination': The Dramaturgy of Light in the Burial Chapel of the Monastic Founder." In *Hierotopy of Light and Fire in the Culture of the Byzantine World*, edited by A. Lidov, 185–99 (Moscow).
- Legrand, L. 1895. *Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni, notaire italien (1394–1395)* (Paris).
- Lymberopoulou, A. 2010. "Fourteenth-Century Regional Cretan Church Decoration: The Case of the Painter Pagomenos and His Clientele." In *Towards Rewriting?: New Approaches to Byzantine Archaeology and Art*, Proceedings of the Symposium on Byzantine Art and Archaeology, Cracow, September 8–10, 2008, edited by P. Grotowski, 159–75 (Warsaw).
- Maguire, H. 1977. "The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art." *DOP* 31: 123–74.
- Maguire, H. [1981] 1994. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Malmquist, T. 1979. *Byzantine 12th Century Frescoes in Kastoria: Agioi Anargyroi and Agios Nikolaos tou Kasnitzi* (Uppsala).
- Marinis, V. 2015. "'He Who Is at the Point of Death': The Fate of the Soul in Byzantine Art and Liturgy." *Gesta* 54: 59–84.
- Marki, E. 1992. "Ἀνασκαφή στοάς Χορτιάτη." *Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* 6: 327–37.
- Marković, M. 2010. "The Painter Eutychios—Father of Michael Astrapas and Protomaster of the Frescoes in the Church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid." *Zbornik Matice srpske za likovne umetnosti* 38: 9–34.
- Milliner, M. 2012. "Man or Metaphor?: Manuel Panselinos and the Protaton Frescoes." In *Approaches to Byzantine Architecture and Its Decoration: Studies in Honor of Slobodan Ćurčić*, edited by M. Johnson, R. Ousterhout, and A. Papalexandrou, 221–35 (Farnham).
- Mouriki, D. 1978. "Stylistic Trends in Monumental Painting of Greece at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century." In *L'art byzantin au début du XIVe siècle*, Symposium de Gračanica 1973, edited by S. Petković, 55–83 (Belgrade).
- Nicolaidès, A. 1996. "L'Église de la Panagia Arakiotissa à Lagoudera, Chypre." *DOP* 50: 1–138.
- Panayotidi, M. 2005. "Village Painting and the Question of Local 'Workshops.'" In *Les villages dans l'empire byzantin, Ve–XVe s., Réalités Byzantines* 11, edited by J. Lefort, C. Morrisson, and J.-P. Sodini, 193–212 (Paris).
- Papadopoulou, B. 2001 [2006]. "Τύπινα υστεροβυζαντινά ανάγλυφα από την Ήπειρο." *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 56: 341–64.
- Parani, M. 2016. "'The Joy of the Most Holy Mother of God the Hodegetria the One in Constantinople': Revisiting the Famous Representation at the Blacherna Monastery, Arta." In *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern*

- Mediterranean*, Studies in the Visual Cultures of the Middle Ages 11, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 113–45 (Turnhout).
- Parpulov, G., I. Dolgikh, and P. Cowe. 2010. "A Byzantine Text on the Technique of Icon Painting." *DOP* 64: 201–16.
- Pentcheva, B. 2010. *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual and Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Radojčić, S. 1967. *Mileševa* (Belgrade).
- Rhoby, A. 2009. *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken*, Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung 1. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften, 374 (Vienna).
- Safran, L. 2014. *The Medieval Salento: Art and Identity in Southern Italy* (Philadelphia).
- Schwartz, E. C. 1977. "The Whirling Disc: A Possible Connection between Medieval Balkan Frescoes and Byzantine Icons." *Zograf* 8: 24–29.
- Ševčenko, N. 2002. "The Five Hymnographers at Nerezi." *Paleoslavica* 10: 55–68.
- Sitz, A. 2017. "Great Fear': Epigraphy and Orality in a Byzantine Apse in Cappadocia." *Gesta* 56: 5–26.
- Spatharakis, I. 2005. *The Pictorial Cycles of the Akathistos Hymn for the Virgin* (Leiden).
- Todić, B. 1999. *Serbian Medieval Painting: The Age of King Milutin* (Belgrade).
- Tsigaridas E. 1988. "La peinture à Kastoria et en Macédoine grecque occidentale vers l'année 1200: Fresques et icônes." In *Studenica et l'art byzantin autour de l'année 1200*, edited by V. Korać, 309–19 (Belgrade).
- Tsigaridas, E. 2003. *Manuel Panselinos: From the Holy Church of Protaton* (Thessaloniki).
- Tsigaridas, E. 2010. "L'activité artistique du peintre thessalonicien Georges Kalliergis." *DChAE* 31: 53–68.
- Underwood, P. 1966–1975. *The Kariye Djami*, 4 vols. (New York).
- Vassilaki, M. 2001. "Workshop Practices and Working Drawings of Icon-Painters." In *Greek Icons: Proceedings of the Symposium in Memory of Manolis Chatzidakis*. Recklinghausen, 1988, edited by E. Haustein-Bartsch and N. Chatzidakis, 71–75 (Athens and Recklinghausen); repr. in M. Vassilaki 2009. *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete*, 317–32 (Farnham).
- Velmans, T. 1988. "Le décor du sanctuaire de l'église de Calendžikha." *CA* 36: 137–59.
- Westphalen, S., and A. Schmidt. 2005. *Christliche Wandmalereien in Syrien: Qara und das Kloster Mar Yakub*. Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients 14 (Wiesbaden).
- Wharton, A. 1988. *Art of Empire: Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery: A Comparative Study of Four Provinces* (University Park, PA).
- Winfield, D. 1968. "Middle and Later Byzantine Wall Painting Methods." *DOP* 22: 61–139.





## CHAPTER 28

---

# STONE SCULPTURE

---

SARAH T. BROOKS

## INTRODUCTION

---

STONE sculpture represented one of the most enduring and prestigious decorative forms in Byzantine building of all kinds throughout the empire's long history. Whether as supporting building elements, critical to keeping the building up, or as pure adornment, sculpture in stone was a hallmark of the Byzantine architectural tradition, and it often signaled the highest levels of patronage. Sculpted stone elements used in the decoration of buildings could include columns, capitals, and entablature blocks; moldings; cornices; frames for windows and doors; fountain elements; sarcophagi and architectonic frames for niche tombs, or *arcosolia*; furnishings, including church altars, *ciboria*, *ambos*, baptismal fonts, and *templon* screens, as well as domestic tables, seating, and shelving; and decorated stone panels displaying dedicatory or commemorative inscriptions.

As well as determining its relationship to the building's larger decorative program, the study of stone sculptural decoration must consider availability, relative expense, function, and possible changes over time to the work's condition, location, and use. The following essay will consider these significant themes in the context of major monuments of the Byzantine past, looking both to the sacred and to the secular traditions to survey the importance of stone sculpture to the Byzantine artistic and architectural practices.

Identified by a number of terms including the Latin *sculptura* and *sculptura* and the Greek λιθοξοϊκή and γλυπτική, stone sculpture is here defined as a three-dimensional work of art, executed in single minerals, such as rock crystal quartz, or in a wide variety of aggregated minerals such as granite and limestone that have undergone consolidation. These stone varieties can occur across broad geographic areas or with a specific character limited to one locale. Through physical and scientific analysis, certain stones may be associated with a particular place of origin, yet no absolute method

for dating stone exists. Stone includes highly valued marbles, formed from crystalline or granular limestone, which could be highly polished by the Byzantine artist, or left in their natural state; marbles vary significantly in color and may be veined, reflecting the sheets of crystallized minerals, or impurities, within them. Diverse coloration, unique patterning, and resiliency are among the qualities that made stone sculpture a premier form of architectural decoration (Ward-Perkins 1992; Sodini 2002; Greenhalgh 2009).

As defined here, Byzantine stone sculpture decorating buildings includes carvings of the living rock, as in the region of Cappadocia in central Asia Minor, in some parts of Cyprus, and in a few other territories of the Byzantine Empire. Here masons and sculptors cut into soft volcanic tuff hills to excavate buildings and sculpted forms of all kinds. For the purpose of this study, stone sculpture also includes work in stucco, made from ground stone and other elements, to form a sculpted material that hardened over time and took on the appearance of stone. Architectural decoration rendered in stucco was first molded or cast and then could be further carved in relief or presented in the round (Ousterhout 1999; Bardill 2012).

Most stone sculptures were finished in some way with color. In the case of carvings from living rock, as on the surfaces of Cappadocian buildings, color was applied in the form of fresco.

When stone was carved from a panel or block, tempera paint, and sometimes painted gesso, was applied to the stone's surfaces. In elite commissions, artists also applied silver or gilding. An example of this can be seen in the *parekklesion*, or southern funerary chapel, in Constantinople's Chora Monastery, which preserves at its west end sculptural frames for two tombs; each retains aspects of its original painted and metallic surface decoration, from ca. 1316–1321 (Hjort 1979; Brooks 2004a; Brooks 2004b) (Figure 28.1).

## STATE OF THE EVIDENCE

---

The surviving artistic and archaeological evidence for stone sculptures once decorating Byzantine buildings is fragmentary. Many originals no longer survive, and significant works are today found out of context. They are preserved in museum collections around the world (Grabar 1963; Grabar 1976; Firatlı 1990; Sklábou-Mauroeidé 1999; Vikan 1995) or in other locales, as on the façade of San Marco in Venice, where many Byzantine *spolia* were immured after 1204 in the wake of the Crusader conquest of Constantinople (see Kiilerich chapter, this volume).

The treatment of Byzantine structures and their sculptural decoration after the Ottoman conquest is critical to this larger picture, and by and large ecclesiastical architecture and its sculptures survive in greater number than secular ones. In many cases, Byzantine church buildings are extant due to their continued use over the centuries. Where later Christian communities were in possession of a building, original sculptures



FIGURE 28.1. Chora Monastery, Istanbul, funerary chapel, painted and gilded sculptural frame for the tomb of Michael Tornikes, ca. 1316–1321. Photo: S. Brooks.

may have been left virtually unaltered, or the community's evolving needs may have led to changes, as, for example, in a sculpture's placement, function, surfaces, or overall condition. In cases where Byzantine buildings were converted for use as Islamic religious buildings, often Byzantine sculptures follow a predictable pattern: figural images were erased altogether, or defaced and left *in situ*, while non-figural decoration was left in place, if the sculpture and its location suited the continuing needs of the faithful (Inalcik 1969/1970; Ousterhout 1987; Ousterhout 2004; Angel, Kuban, and Striker 2007).

The Ottomans' own deep appreciation for stone architecture and stone decoration, and especially colored marble, played a pivotal in shaping the picture we have today of Byzantine sculptural traditions. Stone quarrying was not widely practiced under the Ottomans, and stone salvaged from Byzantine buildings was the major source for new Ottoman construction. Ottoman sources tell us that the glistening and colorful marble paving of the extant courtyard of Mehmet's original Fatih Mosque in Constantinople, and many of the stones in Sultan Süleyman's Mosque complex are Byzantine marbles reused by the conquerors (Inalcik 1969/1970).

This essay will draw upon a broad range of evidence from both the archaeological and written records. Major Byzantine buildings, where stone sculptural decoration survives and has been well studied, will serve as important case studies; past scholarship on stone sculpture and Byzantine architecture will provide a framework for placing this medium in its larger artistic, cultural, social, and economic contexts.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND: TRADITIONS IN QUARRYING, FOURTH TO SEVENTH CENTURIES

---

During the Early Byzantine centuries, ancient quarries across the empire continued to bring to market newly harvested stone of wide-ranging colors and aesthetic qualities. These well-established supplies of valuable stone served architectural projects funded by private individuals, ecclesiastical foundations, and the state, including the wide-ranging and far-flung architectural program of Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565). As for centuries, new supplies of the highly sought-after green stone of Thessaly originated in the two attested quarry sites of the Larisa region in central Greece. This stunning green, richly veined stone was exported widely. Stones of more modest value and status were locally quarried, when available, for use close at hand in building projects that could not afford or access international supplies of the finest-caliber stone. The soft limestone of northern Syria fueled its own building industry, as at the pilgrimage complex of St. Symeon the Stylite the Elder (Qal'at Sim'an, founded ca. 476–490), while sculptors and masons in southern Syria, including in the fifth- and sixth-century city of Bosra, utilized the hard basalt found widely there (Greenhalgh 2009; Sodini 2002; Ward-Perkins 1992).

Several working models for completing a decorative stone sculpture contribute to our understanding of Early Byzantine production. Blocks of unfinished stone could be worked in or close to the quarry, to produce completed stone sculptures or to render first-stage works that would be finalized elsewhere. Sculptors also executed works from start to finish on-site or in centralized workshops and then transported the finished, or near-finished, products to a building for installation or for the addition of final details and installation.

The sixth-century Marzamemi church-shipwreck, first discovered in the 1960s off the southeastern coast of Sicily (south of Syracuse), remains one of the most poignant cases studies in this regard. Its underwater finds document the production of a centralized workshop completing a major ensemble of stone sculptural decoration and shipping it long distances; the cargo reveals several hundred tons of prefabricated stone sculptures that were en route to the western Mediterranean to decorate a now-unidentified church. Archaeologists hypothesize that the ship was traveling from the northern Aegean, based on predominant travel networks of the period and the ship's contents, which contained several hundred tons of stone sculpture. These included works in Proconnesian marble, a fine, blue-tinged, white crystalline marble quarried on the island of Prokonnesos in the Marmara Sea, near Constantinople; this stone was used widely throughout the capital city for Early Byzantine building and decoration of the highest level of patronage. Other building elements and sculptures included in the cargo were carved of green

Thessalian stone, originating in the Larisa region of central Greece and popular among the elite patrons of Constantinople and across the empire. The shipwreck's finished columns, capitals, chancel screen elements, and panels to form a church ambo exemplify the carving style and dominant motifs of Justinianic production in and around sixth-century Constantinople. The newly quarried stone that found its way on board the Marzamemi-bound ship in the form of finished sculptures reflected a sixth-century practice that would not last into the Middle Byzantine period (Asgari 1995; Leidwanger and Tusa 2015).

Between the fifth and the early seventh centuries CE, nearly all new quarrying of the most valued stones and marbles ceased. Major quarries, such as those on Prokonnesos and in Larisa, long under state control, discontinued the harvesting of new marbles that had fed the appetites of imperial and elite patrons across the empire for centuries. In antiquity, the stone industry was driven significantly by slave and convict labor. Major changes in the available workforce are credited with this departure from past tradition; further work remains to be done to understand this phenomenon more deeply (Sodini 2002).

The Mons Porphyreticus quarries in Upper Egypt were early examples of this trend. Quarrying at this state-controlled production site ceased by the late fifth century CE. Mons Porphyreticus had produced among the most valued stones of the empire, the extremely hard, deep purple porphyry stone, emblematic of royal patronage since the Pharaonic age. Such porphyry sculptures, once decorating major public monuments and imperial buildings, include the Tetrarchs of Venice, or sons of Constantine, once affixed to the columned monument of the Philadelphion in Constantinople, and the imperial sarcophagi, now preserved in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, but originally placed in the Holy Apostles church of Constantinople and its mausolea (no longer extant). The state-controlled quarries on the major island of Prokonnesos, situated in the Marmara Sea adjoining Constantinople, appear to have been largely inactive by the late seventh century (Asgari 1995; Sodini 2002).

The closing of the ancient quarries adversely affected many aspects of artistic practice focused on stone, including a sharp decline in the production of stone sculptures in the round. Popular in Greco-Roman antiquity, and carried over into the Early Byzantine period, large-scale commemorative portraits in stone of the imperial family and distinguished individuals became increasingly rare, and seem to have ceased altogether, by the Middle Byzantine period (see Anderson chapter, this volume). One important factor in this history was the dearth of large stone blocks needed to carve such a form. Another factor was the growing Byzantine appreciation for, and focus on, relief carving in the three-dimensional arts. This interest dovetailed with the increasing value that Christian cultures of the Middle Ages placed on the narrative potential of the two-dimensional arts writ large, but especially in all forms of painting (Ousterhout 1999).

## SALVAGED STONE: REUSE AND RECARVING, SEVENTH TO MID-FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

---

After the seventh century, salvaged stone was the major source for new sculptural works. A notable exception to this was the eleventh-century reopening of the ancient quarry on the island of Chios, Greece, to provide new sources of red portasanta marble for the construction of the imperial Nea Moni. In most cases, however, salvaged stone was the prevailing material for new building in the seventh century and beyond. Such recovered stones had typically been carved in earlier decades, or in earlier centuries, and were removed from derelict buildings or from structures newly selected for demolition, replacement, or renovation. These repurposed and reworked masonry blocks or carved elements were creatively and economically reused by Byzantine sculptors of later generations (see Kiilerich chapter, this volume).

An example of the former is the Dumbarton Oaks eleventh-century marble relief icon representing the Virgin as Intercessor (acc. no. 38.62). Standing just over a meter in height and measuring .40 meters in width, the Marian icon was carved on the reverse of a sixth-century panel, decorated with a (now cropped) central diamond motif and surrounding floral and vegetal decoration. This decorative program resembles most closely elements in an Early Byzantine barrier for a chancel or other church space. To salvage and repurpose the earlier, non-figural panel, a later artist cut down the original sculpture to its current size and flipped the piece over, employing the “reverse” side for a new relief carving of the Virgin. In its new eleventh-century context, the figural icon would appear to fit best set into a wall or pier of a templon screen, obscuring the “obverse” with its earlier carving. This example suggests the reuse of older stone for primarily a practical purpose (Vikan 1995; and Stanković chapter, this volume).

By comparison, a second example of reuse at the Chora Monastery in Constantinople suggests a thoughtful reverence for the building’s earlier patron in later centuries. In this case, columns and capitals were salvaged and re-employed for their original purpose in a later phase of construction; these existing architectural elements are hypothesized to have come from the Chora’s eleventh-century church building, or possibly another contemporary church. The re-employment of these earlier elements was carried out with little to no reworking of the pieces, as compared to the Dumbarton Oaks marble icon. At the Chora, the four salvaged, eleventh-century capitals, portraying busts of lorate angels, rest on four reused columns. They are displayed in the complex’s newly constructed outer narthex (ca. 1316–1321), in its southwest bay. The intention in their re-employment was likely symbolic as well as practical: the angels dressed in imperial garb signified the revered royal patronage of the monastery, as well as the monastery’s distinguished history (Hjort 1979).

The example of the Chora Monastery further illustrates a commonplace practice in Byzantine architecture of the empire’s later centuries, especially in major urban centers

such as Constantinople, Trebizond, and Thessaloniki: the display in one building, or in one spatial unit of a building, stone sculptures from different historical periods that evidenced different sculptural techniques and varied carving styles. The Chora's eleventh-century angel capitals in the narthex were part of a larger sculptural ensemble that included many other salvaged works, including a sixth-century door lintel in the church nave. Brand new works of the early fourteenth century were also carved to decorate the building, including portions of a new templon in the nave, and the many marble elements for niche tombs that came to populate the church's narthexes and its southern funerary chapel (Hjort 1979).

## STONE SCULPTURE IN BUILDING DECORATION: INTERIOR SPACES

---

Stone sculpture played an important role in framing and highlighting different aspects of a Byzantine building, including the functional, symbolic, and ceremonial uses of the architecture and its constituent parts (see Stanković chapter, this volume). It could likewise set off and draw attention to other decorative elements within this same space. In this way, stone sculpture was integral to the multimedia environment of Byzantine buildings where decoration was a priority.

Sculpted stone cornices commonly defined both horizontal and vertical spaces within a building. These projecting, decorative moldings along the top of a wall, an arch, or a niche were usually composed of units of low-relief carving, geometric or vegetal in nature, that measured several centimeters or more in width, but could extend a hundred meters in length or greater, as in Constantinople's Hagia Sophia. Sculpted cornices were likely to have been highlighted with color or painted entirely although today surviving examples are rare.

Such continuous bands of relief sculpture traced the perimeter of a spatial unit, such as the church nave, or a secular hall. A cornice could define a dado zone or the lower portion of a wall. In elite Byzantine buildings, the dado zone was commonly decorated with lavish marble veneer; in lesser commissions, fresco in the dado zone might imitate in painting such high-value decoration. Above an arcade or colonnade, a cornice often defined a second-story gallery or a new zone of fenestration. And higher, cornices could define the springing of the vaults or the circumference of a dome.

By subdividing interior space in this way, stone cornices created an armature for decoration in other media. Monumental wall decoration, most commonly in mosaic, was inserted into this sculpted framework. For the decoration of church interiors, cornices in tesserae, or alternatively frescoed, imitated such moldings in stone framing large fields of monumental painting. This can be seen, for example, in the eleventh-century mosaics decorating the apse of the main church of the Hosios Loukas Monastery in



Greece. In the apse, a stone cornice, decorated with a vegetal motif similar to acanthus, marks the transition from the window zone below to the semi-dome mosaic above. A geometric mosaic band or “molding,” composed of blue, red, green, and gold tesserae, appears immediately above this stone cornice, defining the semidome’s curved surface and framing its central icon of the enthroned Virgin and Child against a gold ground. On the face of the apse, a continuous vine scroll in gold on a blue ground, highlighted in red, suggests a cornice executed in painted relief sculpture.

Besides monumental wall decoration, stone sculpture could also be tailor-made to complement decoration in other media, including Byzantine textiles, painting on wooden panels, sculpted and cast metalwork, and miniature carvings in ivory, bone, steatite, wood, and semi-precious and precious stone. For example, the eight marble doorframes in the inner narthex of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (532–537) preserve cast bronze hooks, in the form of bent human forefingers, across their lintels; the arrangement parallels the same design in the narthex’s central and larger bronze doorframe; designs had clearly been coordinated between the stone sculptors and bronze workers. These hooks are thought to have, at times, secured large-scale textiles, hung from the top of the doors. Such suspended textiles would have created a soft barrier, temporarily obscuring views into the church nave, while allowing sound and possibly light to pass through. Depictions of building interiors in monumental mosaic and manuscript painting confirm that textiles were also hung from lintels and arcades between stone columns and their carved capitals, marking off both sacred and domestic spaces for different audiences and functions (see Woodfin chapter, this volume).

Sculpted stone was the major building element for the screen around the central apse of a Byzantine church, or the *templon*. This screen began as a low parapet or chancel barrier with possibly other stone elements associated with it. These could include an *ambo*, or speaker’s podium with stairs, or a *solea*, the framed passageway for the procession of the clergy, extending out into the nave. By the Middle Byzantine period, the central apse and its two side chapels were separated from the church nave by a much taller, increasingly solid wall, sometimes called the icon screen, or *iconostasis* (Phillippidou-Mpourra 1977; Vanderheyde 2007; Marinis 2014; and Stanković chapter, this volume).

Sculpted stone elements could define the *templon*, as in the main church of Hosios Loukas (Figure 28.2): four green stone columns with sculpted white capitals support a relief-carved lintel above; below, two closure slabs with geometric and vegetal motifs define the *templon*’s lower zone. Two wooden icons would have been inserted into this stone matrix, to the left and right of the *templon*’s open door, as seen today, with the possibility of rotating these wooden panel icons according to the church calendar (Kalopissi-Verti 2006; and see Corrie chapter, this volume).

Such a *templon* could be carved out of the living rock, as in many Cappadocian churches, and then frescoed. It could also be constructed of all wood, with painted compositions or relief sculptures in metal attached to it. Sculpted stone represented the most lasting and costly option for the *templon*’s construction.



FIGURE 28.2. Monastery of Hosios Loukas, Phokis, view to the east, eleventh century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.

## STONE SCULPTURE ON THE BUILDING EXTERIOR

---

In Byzantine building, church exteriors tended to convey an overall sense of unity, harmony, and hierarchy, reflecting the spatial division of the interior on the exterior. Churches with stone-and-brick finished façades, rather than those with frescoed exteriors, typically feature repeating patterns in stone, brick, or a combination of the two. This aesthetic accommodated the limited display of stone sculptures in the majority of such Early and Middle Byzantine churches. The two churches of the Monastery of Hosios Loukas provide examples of this tradition. In the main or south church, dating to the eleventh century, the brick and stone masonry block exterior is further enlivened at ground and gallery level by carved white stone window frames. These include stone columns with capitals, original framing for glass, and pairs of closure panels bearing geometric and vegetal motifs. The smaller north church of the Virgin, dating to the tenth century, features an elaborate eight-sided, white stone facing for the church's dome. Relief carvings representing several forms of the cross frame its windowed arcade, and animal-headed stone waterspouts punctuate each of its corners. Both churches feature stone door frames (Figure 20.3).

Carved inscriptions represent another category of exterior stone decoration in Byzantine architecture; such inscriptions can also appear inside the church, but there mosaic or painted inscriptions tend to be more common. Exterior inscriptions were highly visible and could be viewed and read even when the building was closed. Founders' dedications are among the most prevalent of such inscriptions. Examples include the ninth-century epigram of the *protospatharios* Leo, founder of the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou, Greece, 873/4. Leo's carved epigram appears in a single line of relief on the church's eastern exterior (Papalexandrou 2001a; Papalexandrou 2001b). In Constantinople, on the south side of the funerary chapel of the Pammakaristos Monastery ca. 1305, the foundress and widow Martha Glabas records her dedication of the chapel in memory of her husband in a single line of relief (Talbot 1999).

Byzantine sundials for the telling of time were stone sculptures especially designed to decorate a building's exterior. They were placed ideally on the south side of the structure, as at the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou. The Skripou sundial employs Byzantine numbers in relief (indicated by the Greek letters *alpha* through *theta*) to record the passing of the hours as the sun moved across the sundial's semicircular form. Figures of two addorsed peacocks and a central foliate motif, also in relief, decorate the lower border of this sundial (Papalexandrou 2001a and 2001b).

Ancient spolia represent a special class of exterior stone decoration. The display of ancient carved sculptures on the facades of Byzantine churches, often alongside medieval inscriptions and imagery, was particularly popular in certain foundations of the empire's western provinces where the physical remains of *antiquity* were especially pronounced (see Saradi 1997; Maguire 1998; Kiilerich 2005; Sanders 2015; and Kiilerich chapter, this volume).

By the Late Byzantine period, many church exteriors tended toward greater architectural elaboration, and this sometimes included stone sculpture. Regional developments, shaped by the political and cultural circumstances of this dynamic period, produced a wide range of Late Byzantine church façades. In Constantinople there survive *in situ* few examples of sculpture on church exteriors. In the Peloponnesos in Greece, by comparison, Mystras' churches of St. Demetrius (ca. 1261–1300), Sts. Theodores (1290–1295), the Virgin Peribleptos (ca. 1350–1375), and the Virgin Pantanassa (ca. 1430) preserve several fine decorative and figural examples. By far, the most outstanding ensemble of Late Byzantine exterior sculpture is found on Trebizond's imperial monastery of Hagia Sophia (Figure 28.3). Founded by Emperor Manuel I Grand Komnenos (r. 1238–1263), the monastery's main church featured on its south and north exteriors a series of sculpted stone niche tombs (now buried); on the west porch façade, a program of Seljuk-inspired design; and on its south porch, a sculptural ensemble focused on a Last Judgment frieze with Greek inscriptions in relief (Eastmond 2004; Melvani 2014).



FIGURE 28.3. Trebizond, Monastery of Hagia Sophia, South Porch, 1238–1263. Photo: S. Brooks.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

---

One of the most important areas for future scholarship is the necessary foundational study and publication of little-known works, or collections, of Byzantine sculpture found in lesser-known museums or in regional sites. This is especially the case for the empire's eastern territories. Widening the known corpus of Byzantine sculpture will allow us to make greater connections within this now disparate body of visual material; new research opportunities afforded by the digital humanities, especially in sharing visual documentation, are especially important in this effort. Another area for deeper research exploration is the contribution that primary sources, including epigrams and *ekphrastic* literature, can play in helping us to understand the reception of Byzantine sculptures—including those of disparate styles and dating within one monument—and the relationship of the sculptural arts to other media.

## REFERENCES

- Angel, J. L., D. Kuban, and C. L. Striker. 2007. *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restoration at Kalenderhane Camii 1966–1978* (Mainz).
- Asgari, N. 1995. "The Proconnesian Production of Architectural Elements in Late Antiquity, Based on Evidence from the Marble Quarries." In *Constantinople and Its Hinterland*, edited by C. Mango, G. Dagron, and G. Greatrex, 263–88 (Aldershot).
- Bardill, J. 2012. "Buildings and Their Decoration: Building Materials and Techniques." In *OHBS*, 335–52.
- Brooks, S. T. 2004a. "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Kariye Cami." In *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Cami in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, edited by H. Klein and R. Ousterhout, 23–31 (New York).
- Brooks, S. T. 2004b. "Sculpture and the Byzantine Tomb." In *Faith and Power*, 93–104.
- Downey, G. 1959. "The Tombs of the Byzantine Emperors at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79: 27–51.
- Eastmond, A. 2004. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Burlington, VT). *Glory of Byzantium*.
- Firathi, N. 1990. *La sculpture byzantine figurée au musée archéologique d'Istanbul* (Paris).
- Grabar, A. 1963. *Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople, IVe–Xe siècle* (Paris).
- Grabar, A. 1976. *Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Âge, XIe–IVe siècle* (Paris).
- Greenhalgh, M. 2009. *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Mediaeval Mediterranean* (Leiden and Boston).
- Hjort, Ø. 1979. "The Sculpture of Kariye Cami." *DOP* 33: 199–289.
- Inalcik, H. 1969/1970. "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City." *DOP* 23/24: 229–49.
- Kalopissi-Verti, S. 2006. "The Proskynetaria of the Templon and Narthex: Form, Imagery, Spatial Connections, and Reception." In *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 107–32 (Washington, DC).
- Kiilerich, B. 2005. "Making Sense of the Spolia in the Little Metropolis in Athens." *Arte Medievale* 2: 95–114.
- Leidwanger, J., and S. Tusa. 2015. "Marzamemi II 'Church Wreck' Excavation: 2014 Field Season." *Archaeologia Maritima Mediterranea* 12: 103–15.
- Maguire, H. 1998. "The Cage of Crosses: Ancient and Medieval Sculptures on the 'Little Metropolis' in Athens." In *Rhetoric, Nature and Magic in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT).
- Marinis, V. 2014. *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople, Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries* (New York).
- Melvani, N. 2014. *Late Byzantine Sculpture* (Turnhout).
- Ousterhout, R. 1987. *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Washington, DC).
- Ousterhout, R. 1999. *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Ousterhout, R. 2004. "The East, the West, and the Appropriation of the Past in Early Ottoman Architecture." *Gesta* 43, 2: 167–78.
- Papalexandrou, A. 2001a. "Conversing Hellenism: The Multiple Voices of a Byzantine Monument in Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 19: 237–54.

- Papalexandrou, A. 2001b. "Text in Context: Eloquent Monuments and the Byzantine Beholder." *Word & Image* 17, 3: 259–83.
- Pénnas, C., and C. Vanderheyde. 2008. *La sculpture byzantine, VIIe–XIIIe siècles: Actes du colloque international, 6–8 septembre 2000* (Athens).
- Philippidou-Mpoura, L. 1977. *Architectural Sculptures of the Twelfth and the Early Thirteenth Centuries in Greece* (Athens).
- Sanders, G. D. R. 2015. "Use of Ancient Spolia to Make Personal and Political Statements: William of Moerbeke's Church at Merbaka (Ayia Triada, Argolida)." *Hesperia* 84, 3: 583–626.
- Saradi, H. 1997. "The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, 4: 395–423.
- Sklábou-Mauroeidé, M. 1999. *Glyptá tou Byzantinou Mouseiou Athēnōn: Katálogos* (Athens).
- Sodini, J.-P. 2002. "Marble and Stoneworking in Byzantium, Seventh–Fifteenth Centuries." In *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, edited by A. E. Laiou, 129–46 (Washington, DC).
- Striker, C. L., D. Kuban, and A. Berger. 1997. *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture, and Decoration: Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restoration at Kalenderhane Camii 1966–1978* (Mainz).
- Talbot, A. M. 1999. "Epigrams in Context: Metrical Inscriptions on Art and Architecture of the Palaiologan Era." *DOP* 53: 75–90.
- Vanderheyde, C. 2007. *The Carved Decoration of the Middle and Late Byzantine Temples*. Electronic archives.
- Vikan, G. 1995. *Catalogue of the Sculpture in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection: From the Ptolemaic Period to the Renaissance, 100–103* (Washington, DC).
- Ward-Perkins, J. B. 1992. *Marble in Antiquity: Collected Papers of J. B. Ward-Perkins* (London).



---

## *Portable Media*

---





## CHAPTER 29

---

# ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS: RELIGIOUS

---

SUSAN MADIGAN MCCOMBS

## INTRODUCTION

---

MOST Byzantines neither read nor owned religious manuscripts. They learned the stories of their faith in other ways: listening to others read to them from lectionaries, the Bible, and patristic or hagiographic authors; prayers spoken in the liturgy; and through icons and paintings displayed on the walls of their most sacred spaces, churches and monasteries. Byzantine manuscripts were costly hand-produced books with high production values (Lowden 1990; Kotzabassi 2017) created of parchment (the skins of young animals) scraped to remove the hair and smoothed with pumice stones to produce an uninterrupted surface for writing, painting, and rulings (patterns that aligned the text). Scribes practicing distinctive handwriting styles used black, brown, red, gold, and silver inks. Book binders organized folded parchment into gathers, stitched them together, and bound them between leather-covered boards. The covers of the most expensive books were adorned by gold or silver gem- or enamel-encrusted panels. Non-figural decoration was more prominent in religious manuscripts than illustration, as it neither enhanced nor impeded the book's primary function, which was the transmission of text. Instances of illustrated Byzantine manuscripts were rare, perhaps as low as 3 percent of those produced (Lowden 2000; Spieser 2017). These were likely created as special commissions and gifts that pay homage to the original donor or recipient of the book. Most illustrated manuscripts are silent as to date or place of production. Some may be attributed by colophon (end-page scribal notes) (Lake 1934–1939) or by art historical (Lazarev 1967) or palaeographic inference (Kotzabassi 2017). Ongoing and future studies of individual books in the fields of palaeography and codicology promise to reveal more information about production and original use of illustrated religious manuscripts.

## THE COMPLETE BIBLE

---

For the Byzantines, the Old Testament comprised the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew—the thirty-nine books of the Jewish canon and the Apocrypha) (Yota 2017a). The New Testament included the Gospels, Acts, and the Catholic and Pauline epistles. The Bible in its complete form was rarely illustrated (Weitzmann 1959; Lowden 1999), although three artistically similar manuscripts—Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 5.9; Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, B. I. 2; and Copenhagen, Royal Library, GKS 6 2°—may be survivors of a “set” of books forming a complete Bible (Belting and Cavallo 1979; Lowden 1983). The only extant illustrated manuscript of the entire Bible is the Bible of Leo the Patrician, Vat. Reg. gr. 1, tenth century, surviving only in the volume containing the Old Testament through Psalms (Canart 2011). Illustrations in this manuscript include two portraits—Leo presenting the Bible to the Virgin, and St. Nicholas honored by Makar, abbot of the monastery and Constantine *protospatharius*, its founder—and full-page illustrations of Old Testament subjects placed before their respective books. The iconography is diverse: some pictures directly reflect the texts in books they accompanied, while others incorporate themes found in adjacent books.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

---

The Byzantines knew the Old Testament as the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, but heard it in the liturgy as passages excerpted from Genesis, Joshua, Judges, and Isaiah. These were read at vespers and vigils during some days of Lent (Taft 2011). Deluxe illustration editions of the Octateuch, a one-volume edition of the first eight books of the Bible including *catena* (commentaries), was a Middle-to-Late Byzantine phenomenon associated with the aristocracy. Five deluxe illustrated manuscripts are closely related in the design of their programs of illustration and iconography (Lowden 1992; Weitzmann and Bernabò 1999; Lowden 2010; Takiguchi 2017a): Vat. gr. 747 (eleventh century); the lost Smyrna/Izmir, Greek Evangelical School, A01 (twelfth century); Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, cod. 8 (twelfth century); Vat. gr. 746 (twelfth century); and Athos Vatopedi 602 (thirteenth century). Vatopedi, Seraglio, Vatican gr. 746 and 747 share text-integrated miniature scenes inspired by nearby text. Two manuscripts—the (now lost) Smyrna Octateuch and Vat. gr. 747—share a similar layout of the pages with text-integrated illustrations. While a single artist was responsible for the illustrations of Vatopedi 602, other books were produced by teams of scribes and artists. The Seraglio and Smyrna Octateuchs and Vat. Gr. 747 have been attributed to the

Constantinople-based “Kokkinobaphos Master” (1130s–1150) (Anderson 1982) and Vat. Gr. 746 to the “Sub-Kokkinobaphos Master” (Linardou 2007). The five illustrated Octateuchs share so many iconographic components that by using an empirical method based on the analysis of evidence in the books themselves, Lowden was able to demonstrate how some illustrated Octateuchs copied each other (Lowden 1992; Lowden 2010).

Individual books of the Old Testament survive in deluxe illustrated editions as well. A preference for sumptuous illustrated editions of Genesis was apparent as early as the sixth century, as can be seen in two manuscripts: the mostly destroyed Cotton Genesis (London British Library Cotton Otho B. VI) and the Vienna Genesis (Figure 29.1) (ÖNB. Vind. theol. gr. 31). Together, these books represented the most extensive collections of Genesis imagery to survive in Byzantium (Giannoulis 2017). The Vienna Genesis was a true “picture Bible”: illustrations were painted first, after which the text was added in lock-step fashion.

The Cotton Genesis may have been the model for a number of other narrative cycles in the Middle Ages, particularly the atrium mosaics in San Marco Cathedral, Venice (thirteenth century) (Weitzmann 1984; Kessler 2009; Büchsel, Kessler, and Müller 2014).

Although the text and illustration of Joshua was included in the Octateuchs, there existed also a one-volume special edition, the Joshua Roll, Vat. Pal. gr. 431, tenth century (Wander 2012; Tsamakda 2017a). Its unusual format—a roll created by joining sheets of parchment together to form a continuous strip—was used primarily for *Euchologia* (manuscripts containing the liturgies of Chrysostom, Basil, the sacramentary, and the Pre-sanctified Gifts); and for *chrysobulls* and *typika*. The text of the Vatican manuscript was limited to excerpted and redacted passages of Joshua 2:15–10:27. The scribe wrote these passages at the bottom of the sheets. The illustrator then placed the appropriate pictures above the corresponding text. The arrangement of illustrations in continuous frieze format resembled the sculptural bands on Roman triumphal columns.

The Book of Kings, which follows Ruth, was not included in the Octateuch. Kings told the story of Israel from the birth of Samuel to the capture of Jerusalem and the departure of the Israelites for Babylon. Vat. gr. 333, eleventh century (Lassus 1973), a manuscript with possible imperial associations (Kalavrezou 2017), is the only illustrated version to survive. In the Vatican Kings the artists did not illustrate the text narrative comprehensively. Instead, illustration in this manuscript was limited to scenes from the life of David. David was a major figure in Byzantine imperial ideology and the emperor’s archetypical ruler. In the Vatican Kings, David appeared in prayer, as a leader in battle, as the protector of his people, and as an honored participant in ceremonies.

The Book of Job in single-volume form was one of the most frequently illustrated religious texts in Byzantium. This consisted of a prologue, an epilogue describing Job’s life and trials, and speeches by Job and his friends to which were added *catena*—commentary consisting of excerpts by earlier patristic authors—by John Chrysostom and Niketas of Heraclea (Andrews 2017). Typically, artists illustrated events from the text in Job as in Vat. Gr. 749, ninth century. However, some imagery in Job manuscripts



FIGURE 29.1. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. theol. gr. 31. Fol. 12v. The Story of Jacob, sixth century. Photo: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, by permission.

was less literal and instead served as commentary, allusions to events of Iconoclasm or Christological interpretations of the text. In one edition of Job, Oxford Bodleian Lib. Barocci 201 (twelfth or thirteenth c.), the artists illustrated each verse of the text occasionally portraying content from the catena.

The Byzantine Prophet Books contained the texts of the twelve minor (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) and four major (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) prophets of the Septuagint in one volume with catena. Most deluxe illustrated ones (Lowden 1988; Takiguchi 2017b) featured full-page standing portraits against gold or costly blue grounds, as in Vat. Chig. R. VIII. 54, tenth century, and Vat. gr. 1153, thirteenth century. In another manuscript, Turin, Univ. Lib. B. I. 2, tenth century, the artist showed the unity of the prophets by portraying them on one folio in circumscribed bust-length portraits. More unusual in this genre is Vat. gr. 755, eleventh century. This Prophet Book, limited to the text of Isaiah and catena, contained an eclectic program of illustration derived from psalter and hagiographic imagery: a portrait of Isaiah flanked by circumscribed busts of the catenists; and Isaiah between personifications of Night and Dawn (Is 26:9), and a depiction of his martyrdom.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

---

For the Byzantines, the New Testament comprised Gospels, Acts, and both the Catholic and Pauline Epistles but not Revelation. They collected these books variously in one-volume editions that might comprise a trilogy of Gospels, Acts, and Epistles; or any of the books alone; or Acts plus Epistles (*Praxapostolos*), or combined with the Psalter. These survived with and without prefatory texts from patristic and hagiographic literature. Illustration in New Testament manuscripts was diverse, deriving from traditions found in other biblical genres. The simplest means of illustrating Acts and/or Epistles was to introduce the major sections by author portraits (Luke for Acts and Paul for Epistles). These might be standing (London British Lib. Add. 28815, tenth century) or seated, borrowing iconographic elements commonly used for seated evangelist portraits (Oxford Bodleian Lib. Canon gr. 110, tenth century), such as the inclusion of “inspiring figures” as in St. Petersburg 101, twelfth century, where Paul was depicted dictating to Luke. Borrowing from trends in the illustration of some liturgical manuscripts, a seated portrait of Paul introduced the first epistle in Dumbarton Oaks 3 (1084), while the more economical historiated initials were used for subsequent ones. Perhaps showing fellowship in the mission, bust-length portraits of the Apostles were arranged in a grid arrangement in London British Museum Add. 11836 and Mt. Athos Dionysiou 8 (1133). Illustrated New Testament manuscripts were frequent commissions of the Decorative style group of Byzantine manuscripts (twelfth–thirteenth century) (Carr 1987). The artists of this group selected framed bust-length portraits (CUL MS Add.6678, thirteenth century) and intercalated and full-page portraits (BNF suppl. gr. 1335, twelfth century). Depictions of Gospel events were rare in the Acts and Epistles portions of New Testaments. However in addition to portraits, the artist of Chicago Univ. of Chicago, Ms. 965 included framed images of Gospel events for Acts and Paris, BNF gr. 102, eleventh century (Kessler 1973) opened

with a frontispiece depicting four Gospel events in a window-pane arrangement: the Healing of the Lame Man, Peter's Release from Prison, the Martyrdom of St. James, and the Stoning of St. Stephen. In the Codex Ebnerianus (Oxford, Bodleian Lib. Auct. T. inf. 1. 10, twelfth century) (Meredith 1966), the elaborate framed frontispieces for Acts (Luke with Theophilus writing under a medallion scene of the Ascension) and Epistles (Paul writing under a lunette depicting his conversion) continue the designs for the introduction of the Gospel sections.

## GOSPEL BOOKS

---

Gospel books (*tetraevangelia*) and lectionaries (*evangelia*) were the two books proclaiming the word of the Gospels. Numerous deluxe illustrated examples survived from all periods, attesting to their special status. Byzantine Gospel books were typically one-volume editions of the complete text of the four Gospels arranged in order—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They contained referencing aids for readers: a system for numbering the passages developed by Ammonius (third century); canon tables, a concordance of passages with the Ammonian section numbers; and a letter by Eusebius explaining their use. Of all illustrated Byzantine manuscript genres, none has survived in as large number or been as comprehensively studied as the Gospel book (Nelson 1980; Maxwell 2017). Few illustrated examples survive before Iconoclasm. The Rossano Gospels (Rossano Museo Diocesano di arte sacra cod. 1, sixth century) was illustrated by narrative scenes accompanied by Old Testament prophets and the earliest seated evangelist portraits. Depictions of prophets prefiguring illustrated Gospel events appeared also in the Sinope Gospels of the same period (BNF suppl. gr. 1286). From the tenth century on, figural illustration in deluxe Gospel books was generally concentrated in specific parts of the book. For example, the content of prefaces might be selected for illustration (Nelson 1980). Typically, a portrait of the evangelist as author was placed before the opening of his text, either seated in the act of writing (Figure 29.2) (Baltimore Walters Art Gallery W530A, eleventh c.) or standing holding a book or scroll (BNF gr. 70, tenth century).

Seated evangelists could be interactive, energetic, contemplative, or intense; facing outward or twisting to look around at an inspiring figure or assistant, usually John with Prochoros, Peter with Mark, and Paul with Luke (Nelson 1980). Evangelists might also look at or accompany a symbol (Matthew—man, Mark—lion, Luke—ox and John—eagle) or the dove of the Holy Spirit (Spatharakis 1999). After the tenth century, invention, experimentation, and diversity of design characterized illustrated Byzantine Gospel books. A novel but fascinating attempt to provide comprehensive illustrated narratives of all Gospel events characterized the so-called frieze Gospels—Florence, Laur. 6.26 and BNF gr. 74, both eleventh century—decorated with hundreds of small, marginal or inter-text scenes displayed as episodic narration for each book of the Gospels and repeated where necessary. In Parma Palat. 5 (twelfth century), Gospel



FIGURE 29.2. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W530A. Gospels. Mark. Leaf, eleventh century. Photo: Courtesy the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore by permission.

sections began with a selection of several scenes from the text arranged in window-pane fashion. In the Codex Ebnerianus Group (Meredith 1966)—Oxford Bodleian Lib. Auct. T. inf. 1.10; Venice, Marciana Z 540; Parma Palat. 5; and Vat. Urb. Gr. 2—associated with the Kokkinobaphos Master (Meredith 1966; Nelson 1980)—certain



feast scenes were represented in the upper frames of the evangelist portrait or in the Gospel headpiece. The common pairing was Matthew with the Nativity; Mark, Baptism of Christ; Luke, Birth of John the Baptist; and John, *Anastasis*. In the same period, decorated canon tables reached their apogee featuring fantastic beasts, Vices and Virtues, and Labors of the Months (Melbourne National Gallery of Victoria Felton 710.5, twelfth century). The Decorative Style of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, comprising a large group of manuscripts sharing a similar style, iconography, script, and palette, was created during the Latin Interregnum (Carr 1987). Gospel books in this group featured elaborate canon tables, evangelist portraits in energetic poses (London, British Museum Add. 37003), icon-like frontispieces (Florence, Plut. 6.32), Gospel events, and elaborate headpieces surrounding often circumscribed busts of Christ (St. Petersburg, Leningrad gr. 105). Gospel illustration in the Palaiologan period (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) looks back to some stylistic and design innovations of the tenth century (BNF gr. 54 and Athos Iviron Monastery cod. 5) and showcased evangelist portraits and extensive Gospel scenes on gold grounds in the Soft Style (Maxwell 2014a). For this period, scholars have isolated the work of “associates”—teams of scribes and artists working in similar styles. This included the “Atelier of the Palaiologina” (Buchthal and Belting 1978; Maxwell 1983; Nelson and Lowden 1991), where evangelists portrayed against gold grounds and painted in gem-like colors occupied the lower three-fourths of the design field (Florence, Plut. VI. 28 of 1286).

## *EUCHOLOGIA AND LITURGICAL ROLLS*

---

*Euchologia* were manuscripts containing the Byzantine liturgy or rites for the sacraments. The Byzantine church had three major rites. The liturgy of John Chrysostom was performed most often. That of Basil of Caesarea was celebrated during Lent, Holy Week, and the Eves of the Nativity and Theophany, and on January 1 (Basil’s feast day). The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts commonly followed Vespers of certain days during Great Lent and Holy Week. In Byzantine art, the celebrant was often depicted holding a liturgical roll (Gerstel 1994). Liturgical rolls were written by the best scribes of the day (Daly 1973) and survive in both decorated and undecorated form. Deluxe illustrated liturgies date primarily from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries (Marinis 2017). Typically, an illustrated liturgical roll began with a portrait of its author surrounded by a floral headpiece (BNF suppl. Gr. 468); it might also start with Chrysostom and Basil portrayed celebrating communion under the canopy of an elaborate domed church (Athens, National Library, gr. 2759) (Grabar 1954; Kepetzi 1976). While specific liturgical scenes were limited in these rolls, artists were keen to enliven the initials of some manuscripts with whimsical animals and hunting scenes.

## Lectionaries

Lectionaries (*Evangelia*), the book that contained scripture readings (lections) for the liturgical year were held in the highest esteem as service books used in the performance of the Byzantine liturgy (Lowden 1990; Nelson 2016; Velkovska 2016; Yota 2017b). In the liturgical setting, the readings of the lectionary were performed from the ambo by readers, usually the priest or deacon, the celebrants ordained to do so. The book itself was treated as a sacred object, and although only a few survive, lectionary covers were embellished with precious metal and gems in the manner of other liturgical objects associated with placement on the altar (see Klein chapter, this volume). During the performance of the liturgy, the entrance of the lectionary into the church—the Little Entrance—was marked by solemn procession. At this time, the priest or deacon carried the lectionary into the sanctuary to place it on the altar for the start of the liturgy; during the Liturgy of the Catechumens the priest or deacon carried the lectionary to the ambo for the Gospel readings, after which the book was returned to the altar.

In appearance, the text of a Gospel lectionary differed from that of a Gospel book. The passages did not follow a chronological account of Jesus' life, but were aligned instead with celebrations of the church year. The readings in the lectionary were organized into two sections, the *synaxarion* (lections for the movable feasts) and the *menologion* (lections for the fixed feasts) (Getcha and Meyendorf 2012). The readings in the *synaxarion* began with John for Easter Sunday until Pentecost, then Matthew from Pentecost Sunday until the beginning of September, ending with Mark from Lent until Palm Sunday. The *menologion* followed the cycle of the fixed feasts beginning September 1 and ending August 31. The selection of lections within differed in response to intended use. Typically, deluxe illustrated lectionaries were large books written in two columns with large letters for legibility and musical notation (red marks called *neumes*) over the text. Because they were regarded as vessels of the Holy Word, they were made with expensive materials and high production values—the finest prepared parchment, silver and gold for initials, headpieces and miniatures, and even gold text.

Due to variations in lection content and intended use, deluxe illustrated Byzantine lectionaries followed no standardized program (Zakharova 2011), and research is ongoing. Instead, these highly ornate books reflected trends in decoration found in other genres of luxurious liturgical books. Evangelist portraits appeared before their sections in full-page form as in Oxford, Bodleian Lib. Arundel 547, tenth–eleventh century (Madigan 1987) or framed over the columns of the text (Figure 29.3) (Jaharis Lectionary, Metropolitan Museum of Art no. 2007.286, eleventh century) (Lowden 2009).

Some, like Mt. Athos Panteleimon 2, combined full-page evangelist portraits, festal scenes, and historiated initials. Some deluxe illustrated lectionaries contained a limited number of readings. Two “select” lectionaries—Sinai cod. 204, tenth century and Vatican Med. Pal. 244, eleventh century (Lowden 1990)—were decorated with evangelist portraits and icon-like full-page portraits of Christ or the Virgin. So-called Patriarchal lectionaries (Nelson 2016) comprised readings corresponding to the days the Patriarch himself

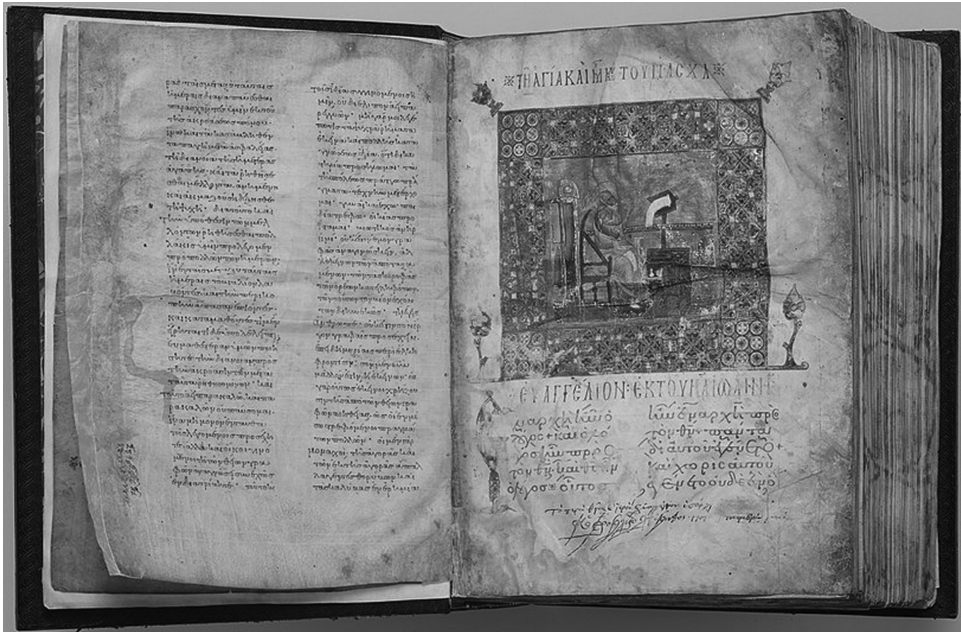


FIGURE 29.3. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. AcC. 2007.286. The Jaharis Lectionary. Fols. 2v–3r. Beginning of lections for Gospel of John, ca. 1100. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art, by permission. Image source: Art Resource, NY (ART494044).

read lections at Hagia Sophia (Nelson 2016; Yota 2017b), with a focus on urban ceremony. Manuscripts such as Vat. Gr. 1156, Venice Istituto Ellenico cod. 2, and Mt. Athos Dionysiou 587, eleventh century, were densely illustrated with evangelist portraits, Gospel scenes in headpieces and margins, and historiated initials (Dolezal 1991; Dolezal 1996).

## PSALTERS AND *HOROLOGIA*

The Psalter and *horologion* were two religious manuscripts used for prayer. The Psalter contained 151 psalms and nine or more canticles, or odes. The Byzantine horologion was a Book of Hours for monastic and private prayer found appended often to a psalter (Parpulov 2014; Anderson and Parenti 2016). The horologion contained odes and prayers for services throughout the day and night (Nocturns, Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, Typika, None, Compline) and prayers, hymns, or canons. Many sumptuous illustrated editions survive of the Psalter, while illustrated horologia are rare. Psalters were collected alone in single volumes or appended to other religious manuscripts such as the New Testament. In addition to Psalms and Odes, psalters contained also hymns or catena reflecting the preferences of their owners. Programs of illustration in psalters were diverse. Except for psalters with imperial portraits most began with a portrait of David as author or musician (Figure 29.4) (BNF 139, tenth century).



FIGURE 29.4. Bibliothèque nationale, MS. gr. 139. Fol. 1v. David Composing the Psalms, tenth century. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, by permission.

Illustrations preceding an ode often depicted the biblical event traditionally associated with it. In addition, some psalms were illustrated more than others: Psalms 50 (Rebuke of Nathan), 77 (the middle of the Psalter), and 118 (funeral subjects reflecting use at death services). Some illustrations found in psalters appear to reflect the private prayer rituals of their original owners. Examples include the icon-like images of the Virgin and Child in Vienna ÖNB theol. gr. 336 (1077) and portraits of Christ in Washington, DC, *Dumbarton Oaks* 3 (1084) placed at the beginning or other prominent places in the manuscript (Der Nersessian 1965). The most extensive collections of psalter imagery appeared in the so-called marginal psalters, represented best by the

Khludov Psalter (Moscow, State Historical Museum, Muz. 129, ninth century), whose illustrations incorporated Christological scenes and references to events of Iconoclasm (Corrigan 1992). Like it, the later Theodore Psalter (1066) (Barber 2007), incorporated those along with saints, feast scenes, genre scenes, mythical beasts, and images honoring monastic spirituality. Images in the marginal psalters were frequently polemical or served as commentary. Where mention of “the righteous” might inspire the image of a saint or monk, “evildoers” might lead to a representation of foes of icon veneration (Figure 29.5).

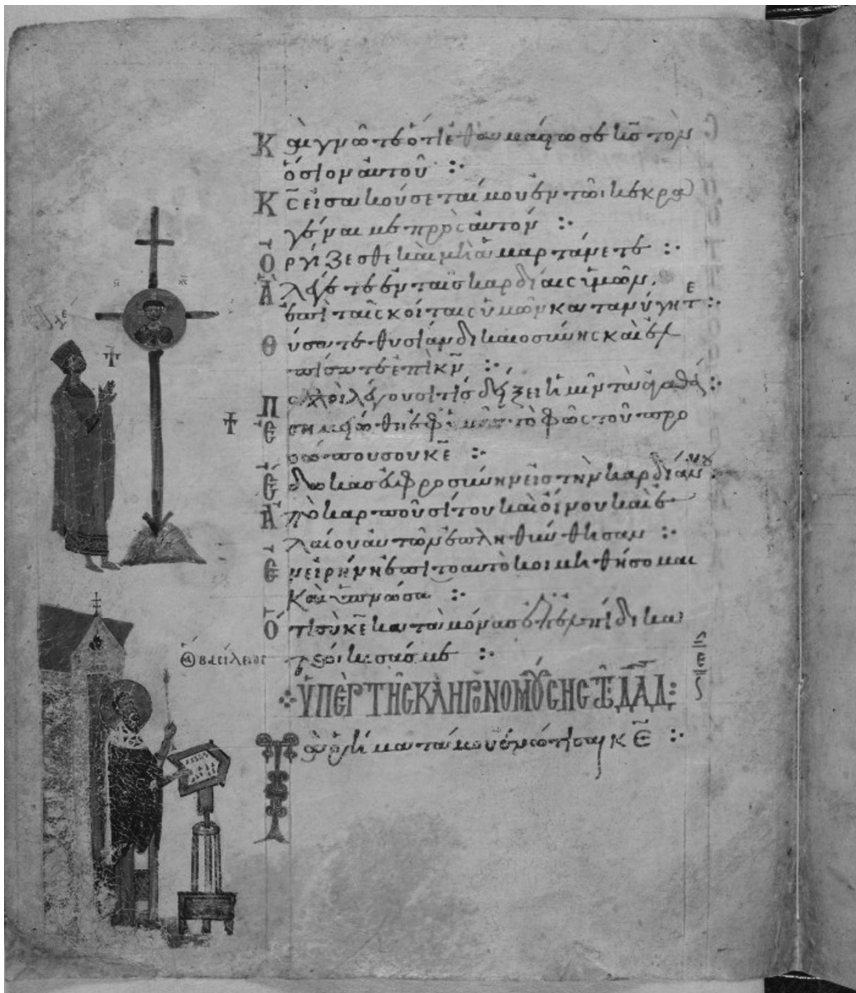


FIGURE 29.5. London, British Library MS 19352. Fol. 3v. David prays to an icon of Christ. Basil of Caesarea preaching (Psalm 4:6 and Psalm 5:3), 1066. Photo: © The British Library Board by permission.

The illustration of horologia follows trends in other genres of liturgical manuscripts. At its simplest, an illustrated horologion contained a portrait of the author of a prayer, as in Erlangen Univ. Lib. A2, where John Chrysostom gives a benediction (Frøyshov 2014). A single headpiece in BNF gr. 331 (eleventh century) comprised circumscribed images of the members of the *Deesis*, angels, and perhaps Old Testament figures (Anderson and Parenti 2016). For Mutilene Monastery Leimônos cod. 295 (twelfth century), the artist provided Gospel events at the hour regarded traditionally as the moment of their historical occurrence and an illustration for a Canon for the Dying (Marinis 2015).

## HYMNS

Music was an important part of the Byzantine liturgical tradition. The chief choir book—the *Triodion*, *Pentecostarion*, and *Octoechos*—contained hymnody for the fixed (Menaion) and movable cycles of the year as well as prayers. Numerous illuminated hymnals survived but few were illustrated. A manuscript of the Decorative Style, Messina, San Salvatore 51 (Carr 1987; Maxwell 2014b), contained eight framed miniatures illustrating the *Anastasis* hymn, which celebrated the resurrection of Christ. These miniatures, placed at the opening text of each mode, feature John of Damascus singing the hymn. The Messina manuscript remains the only surviving Byzantine musical manuscript with illustrations invented for the text. Another choir book, the *sticherarion*, contained the hymns for *orthros* (the morning service also known as *Matins*) and vespers for the liturgical year, along with musical samples for the Canons of *orthros*. Two made in the thirteenth century, Athos Koutloumousiou 412 (Der Nersessian 1977) and Sinai 1216 (Madigan McCombs 2017), featured a similar painting style, tinted line drawings. In the Sinai hymnal, the initial hymn for some months of the menaion were highlighted by a portrait of the saint who was celebrated, while the artist chose inter-text Gospel scenes for the hymns of the *Triodion* and *Pentecostarion*. A third type of musical manuscript contained the *akathistos*, a hymn to the Virgin (Dobrynina 2017). The first half was a narrative of the Virgin's earthly life and Christ's childhood based on the Gospels and *Protoevangelium of James*. The second half concerned the Incarnation and Salvation of Mankind. The *Akathistos* was sung at the feast of the Annunciation, marked in Constantinople by a procession carrying her icons through the city, from the Blachernae to the Chalkoprateia. Illustrations of this hymn were more popular in monumental frescoes, icons, and embroidered works than in manuscript illumination. Only two Greek manuscripts containing illustrations for the text have survived: Escorial, Real Biblioteca, R. I, and Moscow, State Historical Museum, Synod. gr. 429 (ca. 1330s), the latter ascribed to Ioasaph II—a scribe of the Hodegon Monastery (Politis 1958; Hutter 2008). Many of the miniatures were traditional and included the Annunciation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi, and Presentation in the Temple. The iconography of

other miniatures was inspired by the rites and processions for veneration of the Virgin in Constantinople.

## SYNTAXARIA AND *MENOLOGIA*

---

By the end of the ninth century, a series of homiletic and hagiographic texts had been established for each day of the liturgical cycle in monasteries (Cunningham 2011). Two religious manuscripts ordering saints' lives for the liturgical year were the *synaxarion* (a list of saints commemorated on fixed feasts of the liturgical year as they were celebrated in a specific church or city) and the *menologion* (a hagiographic collection containing the lives of saints, *vitae*, and patristic texts). Vat. Gr. 1613 (erroneously called a menologion) is an illustrated synaxarion created ca. 1000 for Basil II (r. 976–1025) (D'Aiuto and Martin 2008). The eight artists responsible for its illustrations depicted standing portraits of saints, martyrdom scenes, and festival scenes such as the Nativity.

The menologion (Ševčenko 1990; Ševčenko 2017) contained longer texts than the brief notices of the synaxarion. In the tenth century, Symeon Metaphrastes reworked or abridged some 150 hagiographic texts into a collection in ten volumes, the "Metaphrastian menologion" (Figure 29.6). This work was revised later under Emperor Michael IV Paphlagonēs (r. 1034–1041) into an "imperial menologion" composed of further reduced versions of the saints' lives to which were added newer hagiographical texts. These hagiographic texts were read at orthros. Like elaborately decorated sermons and lectionaries, deluxe illustrated editions of the menologion reflected trends in decoration of other liturgical manuscripts, particularly lectionaries and homilies with which they share a two-column text format. Typically each saint's reading was highlighted by a rectangular headpiece ornamented by floral patterns and accompanying "cloisonné" initials at the first line of the text (Moscow Historical Museum Sinod. gr. 9). Some menologia opened with one-page rows of saints in registers (Oxford Bodleian Lib. Barocci 230), an arrangement recalling icons and fresco decoration.

Ševčenko (1990) identified editions by layout, script, and type of decoration of many illustrated menologia in an attempt to discern possible surviving sets created by teams of scribes and artists. One edition included narrative scenes illustrating the first reading in the volume. In another edition the programs of illustration were diverse: a saint might stand under a large pylon (Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine gr. 499) or the pylon might display medallions of a Deesis (Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine gr. 326), with the remaining readings marked by floral bars. Birds, a vignette from the life of the saint, or a portrait of the saint might form the first letter of the text (London British Lib. Add 36636). Future study of newly discovered deluxe illustrated menologia will no doubt include elaborations to the teams of artisans associated with the manufacture of the multivolume editions.

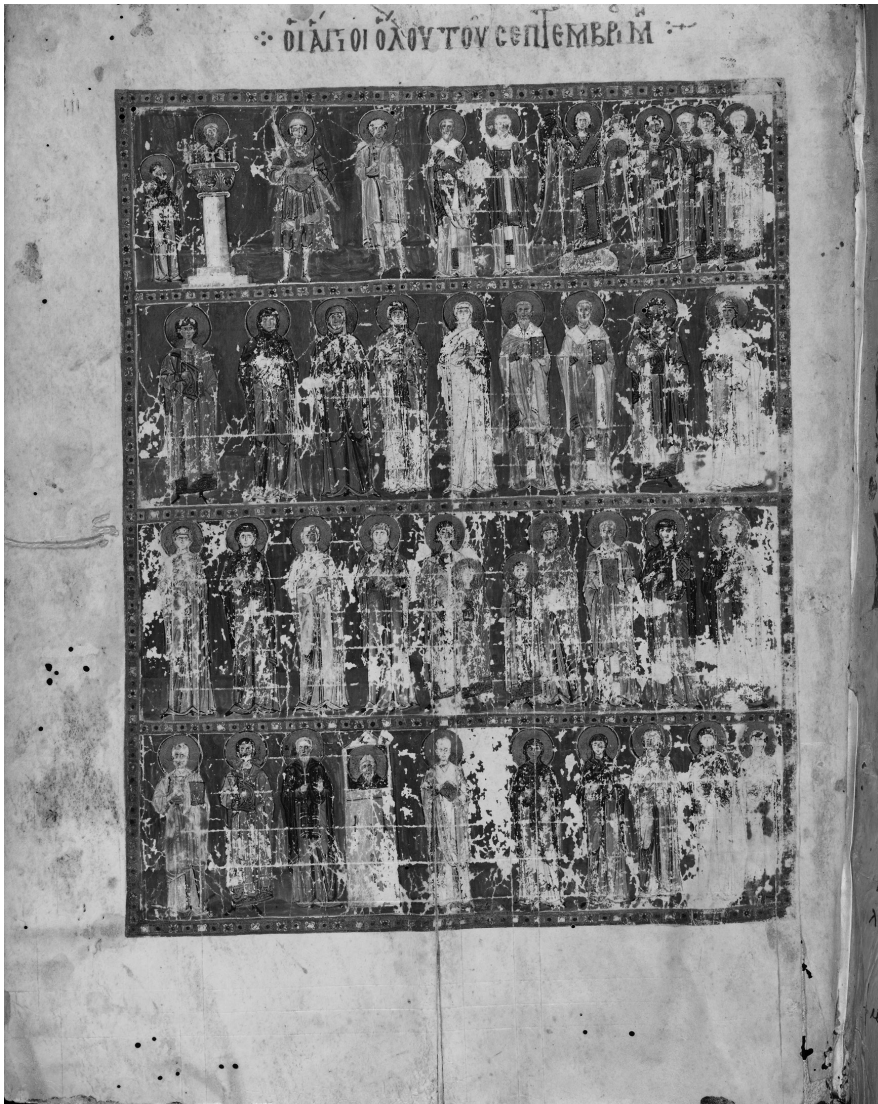


FIGURE 29.6. Oxford, Bodleian Lib. Barocci 230. Metaphrastian Menologion for September. fol. 3v., eleventh century. Photo: Bodleian Library, by permission.

## HOMILIES

---

Sermons were an important part of Byzantine monastic life. In addition to serving private study, sermons were read to the community at orthros followed by vespers and nocturns, thus forming an all-night vigil that preceded the reading of the Gospel



(Cunningham 2011). Sermons were also read in refectories during the midday meal (Popović 1998). While Byzantine homiletic literature includes many authors, the evidence of surviving manuscripts and directions in monastic *typika* suggests that the sermons of John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea were special favorites.

More manuscripts containing sermons by John Chrysostom survive for the Byzantine period than those of any other patristic or hagiographic author, reflecting their high regard and use in monastic communities. Judging from monastic *typika* (Getcha 2012), a sermon by Chrysostom was read at *orthros* on nearly every day in the year (Jordan 2000). The Byzantines collected sermons by theme or use generally in one-volume editions. Editions of Chrysostom's sermons on the Gospels of Matthew and John were read in monasteries continuously throughout the year. Sermons on Genesis and the Psalms were read during Lent. Selected sermons called "the Pearls" were read during certain times of the year as well (Krause 2004). All the aforementioned thematic collections of Chrysostom's sermons survived in illustrated deluxe editions, with the majority dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Although inconsistent in program and type of illustration, these reflected artistic practices found in other illustrated liturgical manuscripts of the same period, such as those of Gregory Nazianzus, the Metaphrastian menologion, and even lectionaries. Typically, Chrysostom manuscripts featured a portrait of Chrysostom composing his sermons in the pose of an evangelist (BNF Coislin 66, eleventh century). When Chrysostom was shown accompanied by St. Paul (Venice, Marciana Lib. gr. Z 97, eleventh century), the double portrait echoes a legend retelling how the Church Father was inspired to write his homilies on the Epistles. Other illustrated collections included historiated initials composed of moments in the lives of monks, zoomorphic initials, and initials portraying acrobats, fantastic beasts, and genre scenes such as the Labors of the Months (Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek gr. 1), reflecting trends for decorating deluxe liturgical manuscripts of the period.

Gregory's sermons were fewer in number than Chrysostom's. Two deluxe illustrated collections of all of Gregory's sermons have survived from the ninth century (Figure 29.7) (BNF gr. 510, Milan Ambrosiana E 49-50 inf), reflecting the preferences for this kind of collection among specific wealthy patrons in that period (Brubaker 1999, 2017). By the eleventh century, a one-volume sumptuously illuminated collection of sixteen sermons for specific feast days appeared, the so-called liturgical edition (Galavaris 1969). These deluxe manuscripts are the most profusely illustrated nonbiblical religious texts to survive in Byzantium. Their single-volume format and expensive materials made them appropriate gifts to churches and monasteries from wealthy donors (Lowden 1990; Brubaker 2017). Even so, there is little consistency in the selection of texts, the choice of text for illustration, or the illustrations as a group. Their materials and styles reflect major trends found in the decoration of other liturgical manuscripts of the period, particularly lectionaries, menologia, even editions of homilies by Chrysostom. Some were illustrated by an author portrait (Florence Laurentiana Lib. Plut. 7.24), while others featured framed column pictures in the manner of a menologion (Athos Panteleimon Monastery cod. 6). Figures inhabiting the gold grounds of floral *pylai* (Oxford, Bodleian



FIGURE 29.7. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. BNF gr. 550. *Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus*. fol. 49r. Oratio 15 (Homily 5 read on Feast of Maccabees, August 1). The Maccabees in headpiece and initial. Hunting scene, twelfth century. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, by permission.

Library Canon gr. 103) or enacting their scenes arranged in registers (BNF gr. 543) were common as well. A number of Gregory's illustrated liturgical editions were decorated by historiated initials and headpieces, framed intercalated scenes, and marginal figures (BNF gr. 550). Gospel events, preaching, and genre scenes parallel similar compositions in other liturgical manuscripts.

Although it was the practice in monasteries to read specific homilies by Basil of Caesarea at orthros on some feast days, no "liturgical edition" existed. Deluxe illustrated editions of Basil's sermons do not survive in the same numbers as those of Gregory Nazianzus or John Chrysostom. Surviving manuscripts date primarily to the eleventh and twelfth centuries and follow trends for decoration found in other liturgical manuscripts of that period, particularly sermons. Representative is BNF gr. 501, twelfth century, illustrated by historiated initials featuring lively acrobats similar to those found in a few illustrated collections of Chrysostom's sermons. However, artists do appear to have favored portraits of the Church Father. Opening an illustrated copy of Basil's *Ethics* is an elegant portrait of the author and his followers against a gold ground (Copenhagen GKS 1343, twelfth century). A standing portrait of the saint opens Venice Marciana gr. Z. 57, twelfth century.

The *panegyrikon* was an eclectic group of readings excerpted from writings of the Church Fathers—menologia, martyria, sermons—for the liturgical celebration of panegyric feasts. The panegyrikon was read at orthros or at the end of the nocturnal feast vigils. Few illustrated examples have survived. One, Genoa, Biblioteca Franzoniana Urbani 38, contained sermons by Gregory Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Amphilochius. For the texts selected for illustration, the artist provided full-page Gospel events associated with the theme of the feast day, recalling illustrations in Gospels and lectionaries.

Although neither distributed widely nor collected in great numbers, two deluxe editions of homilies for the Feast of the Virgin by Jacob Kokkinobaphos—BNF gr. 1208 and Vat. gr. 1162—have survived and both were illustrated (Anderson 1982; Anderson 1991; Evangelatou 2008). These manuscripts are important as representatives of Marian iconography derived from the *Protoevangelium of James* and also because the style of the artist, the notable "Kokkinobaphos Master" of an atelier in Constantinople, may be found in other liturgical manuscripts of the same period. The artist's style was distinctive featuring intense primary colors and extensive use of gold.

By the fourteenth century, one-volume deluxe illustrated versions of homilies by John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea fell out of favor but not so the demand for illuminated versions adorned with exquisite floral patterned carpet headpieces on gold backgrounds seen, for example, in the work of the scribe Galesiotes and his associates (Hutter 2008).

## THEOLOGICAL TEXTS AND COMPILATIONS

---

Monastic communities read *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by John Klimakos (ca. 579–649) continuously during Lent, probably in the refectory where specialized prayer

rituals were performed in association with the liturgy (Martin 1954; Evangelatou 2017a). Klimakos' work, using the literary metaphor of the rungs of a ladder, described how monks attained salvation by cultivating virtues and overcoming vices. At its simplest, the books were illustrated by a ladder (Florence Plut. IX. 3), or an author portrait of Klimakos (Milan Ambrosiana B 80 sup; Freer Gallery of Art, F 1909.151, twelfth century) in the guise of an evangelist. More elaborate, deluxe editions portrayed monks ascending the ladder accompanied by helpful angels or failing at the hands of demons who thwart their progress (Vienna, ÖNB theol. Gr. 207, fourteenth century). In the most poignant illustrated examples of the text, monks were depicted expressing regret or despair (Princeton University Lib. Garrett 16, 1081).

Religious compilations existed but were rarely illustrated. The *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John of Damascus (BNF gr. 923, ninth century) was illustrated by authors' portraits and vignettes portraying the virtues of monastic life (Evangelatou 2017b). BNF gr. 922 (ca. 1060) made for the empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa, featured portraits of her family, Christ, and the authors of the excerpted passages. The Dogmatic Panoply by Euthymios Zigabenos (2017), a compilation of anti-heretical texts, began with imperial and donor portraits.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. C. 1982 "The Seraglio Octateuch and the Kokkinobaphos Master." *DOP* 36: 83–114.
- Anderson, J. 1991. "Illustrated Sermons of James the Monk." *Viator* 21: 69–120.
- Anderson, J. 1992. *The New York Cruciform Lectionary* (University Park, PA).
- Anderson, J., and Parenti S. 2016. *A Byzantine Monastic Office 1105 A.D.* (Washington, DC).
- Andrews, J. M. 2017. "The Book of Job." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 236–45 (Leiden and Boston).
- Barber, C. 2007. "In the Presence of the Text: A Note on Writing, Speaking and Performing in the Theodore Psalter." In *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, edited by L. James, 83–99 (Cambridge).
- Belting, H., and G. Cavallo. 1979. *Die Bibel des Niketas: Ein Werk der höfischen Buchkunst in Byzanz und sein justinianisches Vorbild* (Wiesbaden).
- Buchthal, H., and H. Belting. 1978. *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy* (Washington, DC).
- Brubaker, L. 1999. *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge).
- Brubaker, L. 2017. "The Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 351–65 (Leiden and Boston).
- Büchsel, M., H. L. Kessler, and R. Müller, eds. 2014. *The Atrium of San Marco in Venice: The Genesis and Medieval Reality of the Genesis Mosaics* (Berlin).
- Canart, P. 2011. *La Bible du Patrice Leon, Codex Reginensis Graecus 1: Commentaire codicologique, paleographique, philologique et artistique* (Vatican City).
- Carr, A. W. 1987. *Byzantine Illumination, 1150–1250: The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago).
- Corrigan, K. 1992. *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (New York).

- Cunningham, M. 2011. "Messages in Content: the Reading of Sermons in Byzantine Churches and Monasteries." In *Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meanings: Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker*, edited by A. Lymberopoulou, 83–98 (London).
- Daly, L. W. 1973. "Rotuli: Liturgy Rolls and Formal Documents." *GRBS* 14, 3: 333–38.
- D'Aiuto, F., and I. Pérez Martín. 2008. *El "Menologio de Basilio II": Vat. Gr. 1613: Libro de estudios con ocasión de la edición facsímil* (Vatican City).
- Der Nersessian, S. 1965. "A Psalter and New Testament Manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks." *DOP* 19: 153–83.
- Der Nersessian, S. 1977. "L illustration du Stichéaire du monastere de Koutloumous no. 412." *CA* 26: 137–44.
- Dobrynina, E. N., ed. 2004. *The Greek Illuminated Praxapostolos Dated 1072 in the Scientific Library of Moscow State University: Collected Articles*. Research on and Restoration of a Masterpiece, 4. (Moscow).
- Dobrynina, E. 2017. "The Akathistos Hymn." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 328–350 (Leiden and Boston).
- Dolezal, M.-L. 1991. *The Middle Byzantine Lectionary: Textual and Pictorial Expression of Liturgical Ritual*. PhD diss., University of Chicago.
- Dolezal, M.-L. 1996. "Illuminating the Liturgical Word: Text and Image in a Decorated Lectionary (Athos, Dionysiou Monastery, cod. 587)." *Word & Image* 12, 1: 23–60.
- Evangelatou, M. 2008. "Pursuing Salvation through the Body of Parchment: Books and Their Significance in the Illustrated Homilies of Iakobos of Kokkinobaphos." *Medieval Studies* 68: 239–84.
- Evangelatou, M. 2017a. "The Heavenly Ladder." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 407–17 (Leiden and Boston).
- Evangelatou, M. 2017b. "Sacra Parallela (Par. Gr. 923)." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 418–29 (Leiden and Boston).
- Froyshov, S. 2014. "Erlangen University Library A2, A.D. 1025: A Study of the Oldest Dated Greek Horologion." *Rites and Rituals of the Christian East, Eastern Christian Studies* 22: 201–53.
- Galavaris, G. 1969. *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus* (Princeton).
- Gerstel, S. E. J., 1994. "Liturgical Scrolls in the Byzantine Sanctuary." *GRBS* 35, 2: 195–204.
- Getcha, J., and J. Meyendorf. 2012. *The Typikon Decoded: An Explanation of Byzantine Liturgical Practice* (Yonkers, NY).
- Giannoulis, M. 2017. "The Book of Genesis." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 197–206 (Leiden and Boston).
- Grabar, A. 1954. "Un rouleau liturgique constantinopolitain et ses peintures." *DOP* 8: 161–99.
- Hutter, I. 2008. "Schreiber und Maler der Palaiologenzeit in Konstantinopel." In *Actes du VIe Colloque International de Paléographie Grecque, September 2003*, edited by B. Atsalos, 159–90 (Athens).
- Jordan, R. H. 2000. *The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis*, 3 vols. (Belfast).
- Kalavrezou, I. 2017. "The Vatican Book of Kings (Vat. Gr. 333)." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 227–35 (Leiden and Boston).
- Kepetzi, V. 1976. "Apropos du rouleau liturgique 2759 de la Bibliothèque Nationale d'Athènes." In *Actes du XVe congrès international d'études byzantines, Athènes, Septembre 1976*, vol. 2: 253–72 (Athens).
- Kessler, H. L. 1973. "Paris, gr. 102: A Rare Illustrated Acts of the Apostles." *DOP* 27: 211–16.

- Kessler, H. L. 2009. "The Cotton Genesis and Creation in the San Marco Mosaic." *CA* 53: 17–32.
- Kotzabassi, S. 2017. "Codicology and Palaeography." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 35–52 (Leiden and Boston).
- Krause, K. 2004. *Die illustrierten Homilien des Johannes Chrysostomos in Byzanz* (Wiesbaden).
- Lake, K., and S. Lake (eds.) 1934–1939. *Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, vols. I–X (Boston).
- Lassus, J. 1973. *L'illustration byzantine du Livre des Rois, Vaticanus Graecus 333* (Paris).
- Lazarev, V. N. 1967. *Storia della pittura bizantina* (Turin).
- Linardou, K. 2007. "The Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts Revisited: The Internal Evidence of the Books." *Scriptorium* 61, 2: 384–407.
- Lowden, J. 1983. "An Alternative Interpretation of the Manuscripts of Niketas." *Byzantion* 53: 559–74.
- Lowden, J. 1988. *Illuminated Prophet Books: A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets* (University Park, PA).
- Lowden, J. 1990. "Luxury and Liturgy: The Function of Books." In *Church and People in Byzantium*, edited by R. Morris, 263–80 (Birmingham).
- Lowden, J. 1992. *The Octateuchs. A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illustration* (University Park, PA).
- Lowden, J. 1999. "The Beginnings of Biblical Illustration." In *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*, edited by J. Williams, 9–60 (University Park, PA).
- Lowden, J. 2000. "Byzantium through Illustrated Manuscripts." In *Through the Looking-Glass: Byzantium through British Eyes*, edited by R. Cormack and E. Jeffreys, 85–106 (Aldershot).
- Lowden, J. 2009. *The Jaharis Lectionary: The Story of a Byzantine Book* (New Haven).
- Lowden, J. 2010. "Illustrated Octateuch Manuscripts: A Byzantine Phenomenon." In *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, edited by P. Magdalino and R. S. Nelson, 107–52 (Washington, DC).
- Madigan, S. P. 1987. "The Decoration of Arundel 547: Some Observations about 'Metropolitan' and 'Provincial' Book Illumination in Tenth-century Byzantium." *Byzantion* 57: 336–59.
- Madigan McCombs, S. 2017. "Observations on an Illustrated Sticherarion–Sinai gr.1216." *Discourses of Byzantine Art, Then and Now: A Celebration in Honor of Robert S. Nelson*. University of Minnesota, October 5, 2017.
- Marinis, V. 2015. "'He Who Is at the Point of Death': The Fate of the Soul in Byzantine Art and Liturgy." *Gesta* 54, 1: 59–84.
- Marinis, V. 2017. "Liturgical Scrolls." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 310–18 (Leiden and Boston).
- Martin, J. R. 1954. *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton).
- Maxwell, K. 1983. "Another Lectionary of the 'Atelier' of the Palaiologina, Vat. gr. 352." *DOP* 37: 47–54.
- Maxwell, K. 2014a. *Between Constantinople and Rome: An Illuminated Byzantine Gospel Book (Gr. 54) and the Union of Churches* (Farnham).
- Maxwell, K. 2014b. "The Afterlife of Texts: Decorative Style Manuscripts and New Testament Textual Criticism." In *Byzantine Images and Their Afterlives: Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr*, edited by L. Jones, 11–38 (Farnham).
- Maxwell, K. 2017. "Illustrated Byzantine Gospel Books." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 270–84 (Leiden and Boston).
- Meredith, C. 1966. "The Illustration of Codex Ebnerianus." *JWCI* 29: 419–24.
- Nelson, R. S. 1980. *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book* (New York).

- Nelson, R. S. 2016. "Patriarchal Lectionaries." In *The New Testament in Byzantium*, edited by D. Krueger and R. Nelson, 87–116 (Washington DC).
- Nelson, R. S., and Lowden, J. 1991. "The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions." *DOP* 45: 59–68.
- Parenti, S. 1995. *L'Euclologio Barberini gr. 336*: Vol. 80 (Rome).
- Parpulov, G.R. 2014. *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters ca. 850-1350 AD* (Plovdiv).
- Politis, L. 1958. "Eine Schreiberschule Im Kloster των Οδηγων." *BZ* 51, 1: 17–36.
- Popović, S. 1998. "The 'Trapeza' in Cenobitic Monasteries: Architectural and Spiritual Context." *DOP* 52: 281–303.
- Ševčenko, N. P. 1990. *Illustrated Editions of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago).
- Ševčenko, N. P. 2017. "Synaxaria and Menologia." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 319–27 (Leiden and Boston).
- Spatharakis, I. 1999. "A Dove Whispers in the Ear of the Evangelist." *JÖB* 49: 267–88.
- Spieser, J.-M. 2017. "The Use and Function of Illustrated Books in Byzantine Society." Trans. N. Marinides. In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 3–22 (Leiden and Boston).
- Taft, R. 2011. "Were There Once Old Testament Readings in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy?" *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*: 271–311.
- Takiguchi, M. 2017a. "The Octateuch." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 214–26 (Leiden and Boston).
- Takiguchi, M. 2017b. "The Prophet Book." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 246–57 (Leiden and Boston).
- Tsamakda, V. 2017a. "The Joshua Roll." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 207–213 (Leiden and Boston).
- Velkovska, E. 2016. "The Liturgical Year in the East." In *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, edited by A. J. Chupungco. Volume V. Liturgical Time and Space: 157–76 (Collegetown, MN).
- Wander, S. 2012. *The Joshua Roll* (Wiesbaden).
- Weitzmann, K. 1959. *Ancient Book Illumination* (Cambridge, MA).
- Weitzmann, K. 1984. "The Genesis Mosaics of San Marco and the Cotton Genesis Miniatures." In *The Mosaic of San Marco in Venice*, edited by O. Demus, 72–184 (Chicago).
- Weitzmann, K., and Bernabò, M. 1999. *The Byzantine Octateuchs*. Athos, *Vatopedi Monastery, Codex 602*; Florence, *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Codex Pluteus 5,38*; Istanbul, *Topkapi Sarayi Library, Codex G.I.8*; Rome, *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 746 and Codex Vaticanus Graecus 747*; Smyrna (Olim), *Evangelical School Library, Codex A.I*. The illustrations in the manuscripts of the Septuagint, 2. 2 vols. (Princeton).
- Yota, E. 2017a. "The Complete Bible," translated by S. C. Dirkse. In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 185–93 (Leiden and Boston).
- Yota, E. 2017b. "The Lectionary." In *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, edited by V. Tsamakda, 287–99 (Leiden and Boston).
- Zakharova, A. 2011. "The Relationship between Text and Image in Byzantine Illuminated Gospel Lectionaries." In *Bild und Text im Mittelalter*, edited by K. Krause and B. Schellewald, 283–311 (Cologne).

## CHAPTER 30

---

# ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS: SECULAR

---

CHRISTINE HAVICE

### CONVENTIONS AND LITERARY TEXTS

---

ILLUMINATIONS in books not destined for ecclesiastical or devotional use (see McCombs chapter, this volume) comprise a relatively small portion of the surviving corpus of decorated Byzantine manuscripts. Whether texts were inherited from Classical Greece and Rome, from Late Antiquity, or were new compositions, they reflect the generally conservative preferences and practices of Byzantine *literati*, as did the illuminations that only infrequently accompany them. (For our purposes here, non-narrative or non-illustrative decoration, such as illuminated initials, headpieces, and other such ornamentation, is omitted as less likely to attract the attention of the non-specialist, although these can be invaluable for issues of dating, localization, and production.) However, when decorated, secular manuscripts often provide glimpses of artists facing the task of creating something original within compositions or programs that were otherwise heavily inflected by visual convention (Maguire 1999). This alone makes consideration of secular manuscript illumination a valuable qualifier to our understanding of the nature and history of Byzantine book arts. The following summary is organized by textual content—roughly, genre—but it is to be understood that the Byzantines did not necessarily think in the same terms.

The earliest surviving examples of Byzantine secular manuscript illustration grew out of Classical and Late Antique traditions. Of three surviving Late Antique literary manuscripts with illuminations, one, the *Iliad* in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, now preserved as fifty-eight excised miniatures, was written in Greek; a date more precise than ca. 500 CE and the place of origin are still debated (Bianchi Bandinelli 1955). Its double-framed miniatures appear to represent a reformatting, from simple images inserted into the textual column, without background or framing device—the so-called



papyrus style—to visually more ambitious compositions. The extant miniatures represent what must be about one-third of the original number provided to the Homeric epic, which would have thus been profusely illustrated. The nuclei of many compositions have been shown to derive from Hellenistic conventions, so were likely not created specifically for this manuscript but modeled on older images, probably in other media such as vase painting and relief (such as Figures 8.5 and 34.2). Here one encounters the heavy hand of visual traditions that will weigh implacably across the Byzantine centuries, as well as the ambition of planners who sought to ennoble their books with authoritative, respected imagery embroidered upon in Late Antiquity. The question of sources, then, and the nature of the decision-making process in the design and execution of Byzantine manuscripts, along with workshop practices and relationship to the economic resources to support them, can be answered only rarely and partially. Art historical scholarship in the twentieth century was dominated by the identification of these sources and the effort to reconstruct lost originals or archetypes through the persistence of images copied repeatedly for specific texts.

In contrast to this heavily illuminated book, other works of non-religious literature in Byzantium seem to have presented little demand for illustration, faced with the competition of profuse imagery in saints' lives, homilies, and commentaries. Most new literary texts, such as the verse romance *Digenes Akritas*, composed probably in the twelfth century, seem not to have been illuminated at all.

Only the *Alexander Romance*, relatively late in its long history, finally acquires narrative illustration in two of almost twenty copies of the text from the Middle Byzantine period onward (Xyngopoulos 1966). The densely illustrated, fourteenth-century manuscript in the Hellenic Institute in Venice “Byzantinizes” its images to present its hero in terms recognizable in the current emperor in Trebizond, Alexios III Komnenos, for whom this book was probably made. Its miniatures represent Alexander as a Byzantine *basileus*, receiving emissaries, leading cavalry into battle, and wielding authority. The dedicatory inscription, voiced in the first person, addresses Alexander, who was likely depicted in the facing full-page miniature, now missing, as the emperor's model for kingship. This strategy of first-person speech repeats frequently in the text, usually with Alexander speaking, and is paraphrased in the rubrics to the miniatures. For the image in the lower register of folio 39r the rubric reads, “Alexander says: ‘What favor can I do you, Diogenes?’” (Figure 30.1/Color Plate 15A).

Further, the manuscript organizes its 250 images into clusters, not always adjacent to their text, the bright red rubrics matching the color of the frames and the hand distinct from that of the romance text. Trahoulia (2010) convincingly argues that these rubrics functioned as mnemonic devices for someone reciting the romance from memory, while the book itself, at 320 × 240 mm, was substantial enough to have been displayed to the emperor or other listeners, presumably on some type of stand. Such practice of declaiming a text while its miniatures were shown to an audience—a medieval TED



FIGURE 30.1 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 15A). Hellenic Institute Library, Venice, cod. 5. *Alexander Romance*, fol. 39r: Alexander and Diogenes (lower register). Hellenic Institute, Venezia.

Talk—is testified to in several Western manuscripts from the twelfth century onward (Camille 1989); scholars have recognized evidence for similar presentation in other Byzantine religious and secular manuscripts (Burke 2006; Barber 2007). It is entirely possible that the reader may have performed those first-person speeches, developing the text’s theatrical possibilities through presentation. Certainly other unusual organizational and compositional choices throughout the Venice Alexander argue for its adaptation for such purposes.

## CHRONICLES AND HISTORICAL TEXTS

---

Actual historical texts offer evidence of a different type. Recent scholarship favors Norman Sicily as the site of production of the sole surviving illustrated Greek chronicle, the *Synopsis historiarum* of John Skylitzes, now in Spain’s Biblioteca Nacional (Tsamakda 2002; Boeck 2015). Three later chronicles—the versified Bulgarian Chronicle of Manasses (Dujcev 1963; Boeck 2015); the Kievan Radziwill Chronicle (*Radzivilovskaya letopis* 1994) of 1206, also richly illustrated; and the early fourteenth-century *Chronicle of the Monk George* (“Hamartolos”) (Knjazevskaia 1995)—attest to additional lost strands of richly illuminated Byzantine histories, which should however be reconstructed and interpreted with caution. As an example: many of Skylitzes’ 575 miniatures have been adduced as examples of Byzantine *realia*, such as marriage ceremonies, court dress, and that notorious maritime weapon, Greek fire. The practice of taking the illustrations at face value can, however, be perilous: the surviving chronicles, as well as their Western counterparts (such as the twelfth century *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris), are laden with visual conventions, such as the recurrent deathbed scene and with other details betraying dependence on specific models (Oikonomides 1992), rather than recording contemporary observations. The Madrid Skylitzes readily reveals that no fewer than three teams of artists, working broadly in three distinctive styles, each drew upon equally varied sources for iconography and conventions. So it becomes problematic to characterize the manuscript as a homogenous copy reflecting Byzantine tradition.

Or even as a product of Byzantine tradition at all: Boeck (2015) has recently shown that the Madrid manuscript contains miniatures that reveal distinctly anti-Constantinopolitan, anti-Imperial biases, presumably those of their Siculo-Norman planners. Such bias appears to have dictated the choice of unflattering episodes for illustration, altering the program in the model to emphasize betrayal and ignominious imperial death, images of which certainly would not have existed in any manuscript created in the capital. One must conclude from this and other recent studies that the surviving chronicles and their illuminations cannot be taken as straightforward witnesses to Byzantine history, to Byzantine *realia*, or even to workshop practices in the capital.

## TEXTS ON MEDICINE AND NATURAL HISTORY

---

One scientific manuscript easily attributable to Constantinople is the celebrated Vienna manuscript of Dioscorides' *De materia medica*, exceptional among non-religious manuscripts in being a luxury work intended for presentation to a specific patron, the wealthy princess Anicia Juliana. It adheres to the necessity of providing how-to images. Its carefully observed, life-sized (or larger) representations of plants delineate those features, including stems, leaves, branches, flowers, fruits, and root systems, which were needed to enable the user to identify and harvest these medicinal plants. To the extent that all features of a plant over its life cycle are presented in a single image, they, of course, also represent an abstraction. Among the dozen or so surviving Dioscorides manuscripts with illuminations, this book, dated to ca. 512 CE, distinguishes itself by the artist's direct engagement with nature and skillful translation of three-dimensional information into two dimensions in the many botanical pictures. Later versions of the text, such as Morgan 652 of the tenth century (likely a copy of the Vienna manuscript), reveal artists further abstracting, often for purposes of symmetry; flattening; and otherwise choosing a more decorative, patterned presentation. As with other scientific illuminated manuscripts, these herbals, given their size, cannot have been field guides so much as recipe books, but we can infer that some were indeed put to use (in fact, the Vienna manuscript, even with its great size and luxury production, appears to have been used in the early fifteenth century in a Constantinopolitan hospital) and that the illuminations, of the Dioscorides here, at least, were integral to their utility, as later marginal comments, transcriptions, and translations of names in Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin attest (Brubaker 2002).

The Vienna manuscript also features a series of arguably original prefatory miniatures that depict the codex's presentation and dedication to the princess—the earliest surviving manuscript donor portrait (fol. 6v)—accompanied by two more conventional images of *collegia* of the *doctores* whose texts are incorporated into or follow Dioscorides' (fols. 2v and 3v). As in religious manuscripts, these portraits follow familiar conventions but have also been sufficiently particularized to point to the contents of this book.

Two other prefatory images in this extraordinary manuscript depict the process of its creation: on folio 4v, the more conventional image of the seated author represents "Discovery," personified by *Heuresis* holding a mandrake plant, while a dog who has eaten it writhes in death throes at Dioscorides' feet. The generic philosopher type depicted here is elaborated with details of the story that are not in fact recorded in Dioscorides' text. So this composition results from assembling disparate elements from several sources into a full-page, elaborately framed image tailored expressly to this luxury introduction.

Even more original, the subsequent image on folio 5v represents the author at work, composing his text, while an artist, whose dress reveals his lower status, paints an image

of the mandrake on a sheet pinned to an easel (shown in considerable detail; Figure 30.2). That he works from nature is emphasized by the central personification of *Epinoia* (“the Power of Thought”), who holds the plant before his eyes as *Heuresis* had done for Dioscorides in the previous miniature. Moreover, the artist in the miniature brushes the image onto a parchment sheet, the square shape of which prefigures that of this very codex. Tools and furnishings are carefully delineated on his worktable; compositionally, the activity of painting occupies at least as much space as writing in this image. This is a rare Byzantine witness to an artist at work; equally rare, this self-referential image,



FIGURE 30.2. Austrian National Library, Vienna, cod. med. Gr. 1. *Dioscorides' "De materia medica,"* fol. 5v: Dioscorides, artist, and personification of *Epinoia* in workshop. Austrian National Library.

depicting its own production, represents the painter as an anonymous contemporary craftsman, not in the guise of a figure from the Classical past or from Christianity.

The Vienna Dioscorides manuscript is augmented by paraphrases of other medical texts, illuminated versions of some of which also appear to have circulated independently in Late Antiquity, the Byzantine centuries, and beyond: Nikander's *Theriaka* (a surviving illustrated copy in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale française. cod. suppl. gr. 247) on snakebites and their remedies; Oppian's *Halieutika* on fishes; and Dionysios' *Ornithiaka* on birds. While not all these original texts survive, Kurt Weitzmann (Weitzmann 1952) identified their descendants among Islamic books of the later Middle Ages. He inferred from those images that do appear that illustrations of fish, fowl, and reptiles originally complemented the descriptive medical text as simple papyrus-style images, without frames, backgrounds, or other attributive details. In the Vienna Dioscorides, these texts are accompanied by simple paintings that are not always as faithful in their adherence to natural traits as those in the herbal portions of the manuscript. Such abstraction likely reflects the distinctive manuscript traditions of each, which in Byzantium exercised considerable power, rather than the (lack of) skills or imagination of the artists involved. We seldom encounter originality in Byzantium in terms we would today recognize (Cutler 1995).

However, during the Middle Byzantine centuries, artists did sometimes expand such laconic images to include landscape settings and human figures, at first in order to delineate cause and effect (the injury suffered) or to show how to harvest the plant parts needed to effect a cure (Weitzmann 1952). On folio 12 of the Paris Nikander (suppl. gr. 247), figures and a ship inspired by the *Iliad* are inserted to accompany the particular African snake, the *haimorois*, which was said to have fatally struck Menelaus' pilot, Canopus, creating a "scene." The elaboration of what we may infer were originally simple illustrations in Classical texts can also be seen in such Middle Byzantine copies of treatises as that on joints, by the first century BCE physician Apollonius of Kitium (Florence, Laur. Plut.74.4) (Bernabò 2010) and in the *Hippiatrika*, an illustrated equine veterinary manual (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale française, gr. 2244) (Lazaris 1995). The artists in these manuscripts preserved the authority of their *auctores* by copying the kernel of each miniature from existing witnesses, rather than drawing on the observation of contemporary clinicians at work. They then expanded settings and added framing devices to provide greater context and aesthetic interest. Art historians have traditionally preferred to isolate what was once technical illustration from their focus on the more elaborate illuminations in Byzantine manuscripts, but, in the early twenty-first century, such distinctions appear increasingly arbitrary and unproductive.

Illustration of the Byzantine *Physiologos*, now taken as the source of the Western bestiary, is known only through photographic documentation of a destroyed manuscript once in the library at Smyrna (Strzygowski 1899), which Lazaris has recently demonstrated is also reflected in a post-Byzantine manuscript now in Sofia (Lazaris 2005). The Christian, magico-allegorical interpretation of its subjects—animals, birds, reptiles, some plants, and stones—removes it from the more strictly scientific traditions of the medical texts just examined and alerts us to the fact that, in the medieval world,

layers of religious explication readily accrued to topics we might otherwise think of as secular (see Tuerk-Stonberg chapter, this volume). Physiologos images migrated into other contexts, both secular (household and personal objects) and religious (psalters and homilies), retaining the potency of their Christian content.

## TEXTS ON HUNTING

---

As a genre, texts on hunting occupy a position somewhere between natural history and warfare. The densely illustrated *Cynegetica* of the Pseudo-Oppian now in Venice (Marciana gr. 479) is another Middle Byzantine product that grew out of Classical texts. Many of its illuminations appear shared with the Vienna *Dioscorides*. Spatharakis (2004) identifies the rich array of written and visual sources reflected in scenes of animals, hunting, and mythology but also points out that, at the beginning of book 4, the poet claims he will “sing” of what he saw with his own eyes, claiming for those images verisimilitude. Spatharakis distinguishes this group of miniatures as restricted in the range of animals and the types of hunting depicted, and given to frequent mythological digressions, in comparison to the preceding miniatures., an indicator of the challenges of working without a painted example. The original work was dedicated to the emperor Caracalla, which would account for the profuse illumination; the circumstances that produced the Venice copy, of the third quarter of the eleventh century and now incomplete, remain elusive, although scholars agree that it came from a scriptorium in Constantinople that also produced biblical manuscripts with similarly dense pictorial decoration (Anderson 1978).

The *Cynegetica* miniatures span the full textual column, usually unframed and intermittently inscribed; they represent the activities and appearance of both animals and people, of landscape settings, and other features of rural life; and they closely adhere to the text. Some painted details appear to update the miniatures, while others such as the belted tunics and decorated leggings of hunters betray continued reliance on iconographies going back to the Romans and presumably the third-century archetype. This means that artists confidently moved between respectful adherence to the images in the model before them and alteration of formal and iconographic features to meet other exigencies. One depends on the text to clarify the details of some miniatures, whereas others appear more conventional and “genre”-like, but the distinction is seldom obvious (a marginal genre illustration of hunting may be seen in Figure 29.7).

## TEXTS ON GEOGRAPHY

---

As they did with illuminations for many natural history texts, Byzantine artists favored allegorical interpretations for geographical treatises. The best-known is the *Christian*

*Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes*, which, true to its name, interprets the world in Christian terms. The text is a kind of gazetteer, a compendium of observations on India—the sobriquet means “India traveler”—as well as Ceylon, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, composed in the mid-sixth century and best known through the late ninth-century copy, Vatican gr. 699 (Brubaker 2006). Cosmas’ regular reference to illustrative diagrams requires that these appeared in his original. They borrow available biblical iconography, such as representing Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus for Cosmas’ description of the site, but they also must explicate his idiosyncratic thesis that God formed the world in the shape of Moses’ tabernacle. For this, a set of newly conceived miniatures was needed, combining features of maps, diagrams, and landscape paintings; they reappear with relatively minor variations in the two eleventh-century copies (St. Catherine’s on Sinai, gr. 1186, and Florence, Laurentianus Plut.IX.28) (Anderson 2013). Though one must use the concept of originality in a more restricted sense here, it is evident that in some cases Byzantine artists, lacking any type of model, could rise to the challenge of devising an image based on textual description alone.

Manuscripts of other geographical treatises survive from much later: Ptolemy’s *Geographia Hyphegesis* was translated from the Latin back into Greek by Planudes only in the late thirteenth century, when it was provided, apparently for the first time, with maps by Byzantine artists (Chrysochoou 2014). Although maps may be a special case of technical illustration, Chrysochoou has recently suggested that these, occurring in only 25 percent of the sixty-five surviving copies of the *Geographia*, were created in the model not by copying from some other exemplar but solely by following Ptolemy’s detailed instructions. She interprets them as products of Late Byzantine scholars who took on Ptolemy as a kind of brain-teaser, and she has replicated the process of re-creating the relevant map using the tools available to the thirteenth-century reader. By this interpretation, these particular maps functioned not as prescriptions for travel, or even as confirmation of geographical phenomena or observations in the way that the miniatures in the *Christian Topography* had, even if their large format—comparable to contemporary print atlases—did not preclude their use as field guides. Instead, they seem to have been models for a particular kind of intellectual exercise for the armchair traveler of Late Byzantium.

## TEXTS ON WARFARE

---

The rich Byzantine tradition of military manuals, reliant as other genres on Classical sources, is sometimes accompanied by technical drawings but has otherwise not contributed significantly to the body of secular manuscript illumination, with one exception. This occurs in Vat. gr. 1605, the mid-eleventh-century copy of a tenth-century treatise on siegecraft attributed to the anonymous “Hero of Byzantium” (Figure 30.3). The Vatican’s copy of the *Pareangelmata Polorcetica* (along with a second treatise, the *Geodesia*) contains thirty-eight painted illuminations which, diagram-like, delineate the



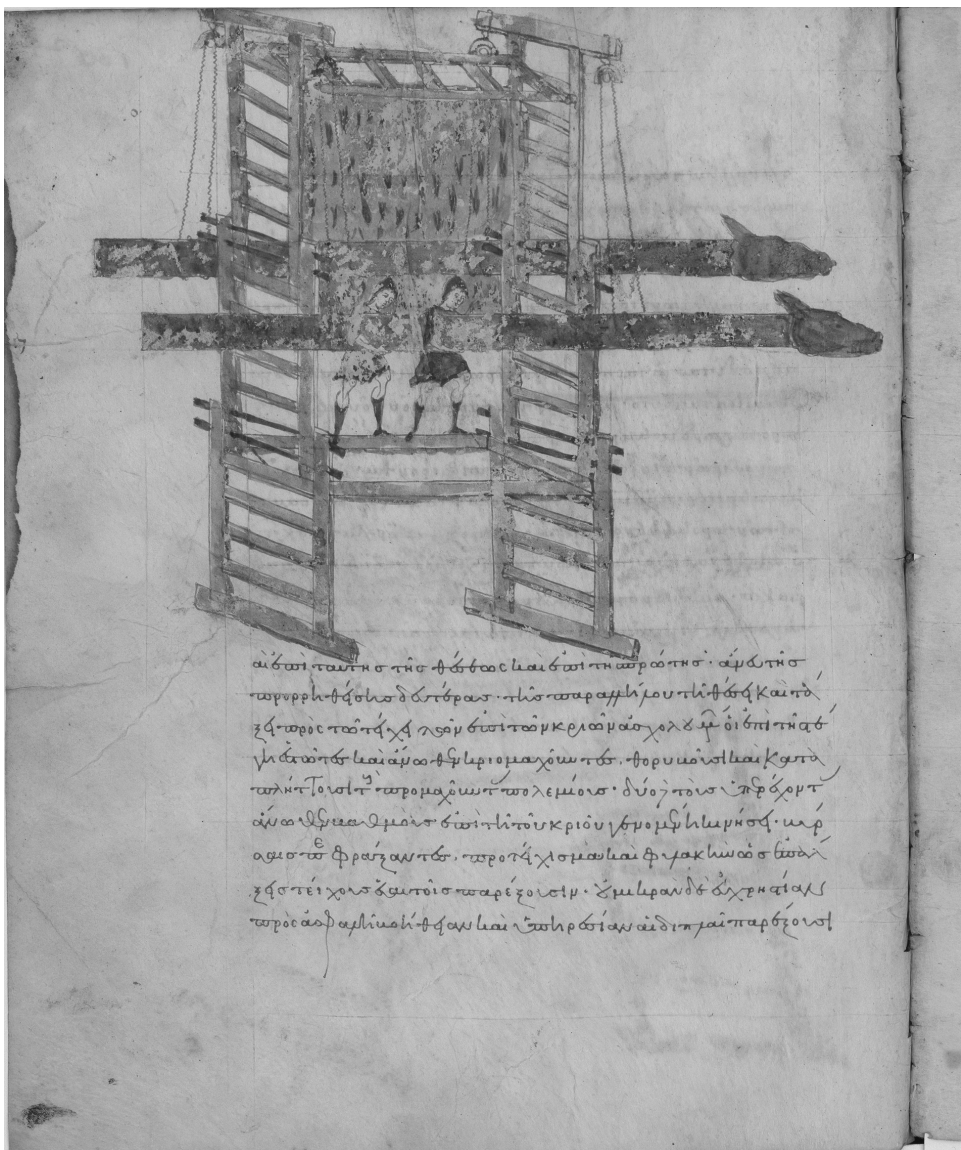


FIGURE 30.3. Vatican Apostolic Library, cod. gr. 1605, Hero of Byzantium *Parangelmata Poliorcetica*, fol. 30v: Battering Rams with operators. © 2018 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

features of various types of siege engines, tunneling devices, battering rams, tortoises, and other mechanisms for attacking fortified cities (Sullivan 2000). These illustrations are unframed and furnish few details of settings, so they appear to be amplified technical drawings. Yet, to make clear the construction and functioning of these devices, the artist makes a fairly successful, if inconsistent, effort to represent them fully articulated and in a limited three-dimensional space: the battering ram on folio 30v is deliberately

situated at an oblique angle and all relevant beams are carefully depicted receding in space to reveal their interrelationships. As observed in other Middle Byzantine secular manuscripts, here too the artist inserts figures, in this case two soldiers operating the rams. But here they have necessary functions: they demonstrate the device's operation, and they provide a sense of scale.

This painstaking visualization finds reinforcement in an even more remarkable feature of this treatise: the anonymous Hero of Byzantium, in both introduction and conclusion, alerts the reader to the necessity he faces in providing his images with concrete details to make the text more comprehensible (Sullivan 2000, 8–12). He contrasts in Neo-Platonic terms the “drawing” (*schema*) found in his sources with the “illustration” (*schematismos*) he offers, the latter images being given “definition,” directed more to the senses by presenting the surface appearance of objects. He justifies this more direct style as better suited to instruct the “unknowing,” the non-engineer, and goes on to contrast it with the more abstract, more “obscure,” presumably the more conventional and abstracted approaches typical of Byzantine art, which he describes as being aimed at the “knowing.” This would correspond in his textual sources to a more valued, more abstracted rhetoric, the complexities of which have been responsible for the contemporary pejorative sense of “Byzantine.” This self-conscious acknowledgment of the distance between “high” rhetoric and the kind of explanation that makes practical tasks possible appears to be a distinct moment in the history of Byzantine visual theory: the Hero of Byzantium speaks in a “popular” style and recognizes the practical obstacles presented by prevailing formal rhetoric, at least as regards military engineering. We seldom witness such a perspective in extant Byzantine sources, although important scholarship has focused on the relationship of rhetoric to art in religious contexts (Maguire 1981).

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH

---

A survey of the illuminations in the multiple genres included in the category “secular manuscripts” seems long overdue; much new material has come to light since Weitzmann’s inventory of Byzantine sources in Islamic scientific illustration (1952), which did not include magical, astronomical, or geographical texts. The unprecedented access to all types of manuscripts, via the digitization efforts of many holding institutions over the past decades, now permits considerable study to be conducted asynchronously and at various distances. One can virtually page through entire books, both stars and lesser lights, despite being place-bound. The shattering of the practical and economic limitations imposed by earlier publication practices affects the study of manuscript illumination exponentially: details and cropped miniatures can be countered by the digital availability of all components of the medieval manuscript. Other caveats apply, but first encounters with Byzantine manuscripts are no longer limited to a fortunate few. Simultaneously, the expansion of art history to embrace “visual studies” or “visual culture” (Maguire and Maguire 2007) is especially productive when more liminal visual

elements—diagrams and other such abstractions as maps—can be included in the scope of investigation.

It is still necessary for scholars to consider why secular manuscripts were created and how they were used. The pragmatic application of many of the genres represented in the category of “secular” does not necessarily mean that their uses, in privileged or otherwise restricted communities such as monasteries, are well understood. Scholars have yet to describe a “day in the life” of a book as beloved as an illuminated psalter, not to mention that of the much rarer *Cynegetica* or herbal. Were luxury books kept under lock and key? The particular qualities of certain secular manuscripts such as the *Alexander Romance* might seem to isolate them in their performative role, but the possibility that more modest works, secular and religious, fulfilled similar expectations suggests directions for further consideration. Books were objects both material and spiritual—precious, heavy, charged with meaning—and they were, mostly, exceptional experiences in the Middle Ages. Western scholarship has gone more deeply into the evidence for their somatic significance, sometimes with the use of technology unavailable even a generation ago (Rudy 2013; Gibbons 2017).

Multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives will continue to be critical when it comes to understanding how planners and artists undertook to provide illumination to secular texts. Received texts—Classical such as the herbal, and medieval, such as the chronicle—continued to be elaborated upon as tastes changed; the modifications to the illustrative program in the Madrid Skylitzes in Palermo incorporates Western and Islamic formulae that certainly came from artists trained beyond Byzantium, yet little is known about how such cross-fertilization worked, or, in this case, even whether there was anything like a scriptorium in Palermo where this would have taken place.

The use of embellished books as gifts and their portability were important vectors in medieval culture: the work of antiquarians, librarians, and anthropologists provides needed perspectives for any interpretation seeking to go beyond the descriptive. Today’s greater ease of communication among all those engaged in manuscript research should facilitate crossing disciplinary boundaries to consider the material and human dimensions of Byzantine books.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. C. 1978. “Cod. vat.gr. 463 and an Eleventh-Century Byzantine Center.” *DOP* 32: 175–96.
- Anderson, J. C., ed. 2013. *The Christian Topography of Kosmas Indikopleustes: Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 9.28. The Map of the Universe Redrawn in the Sixth Century*. Folia picta: manoscritti miniati medievali 3 (Rome).
- Barber, C. 2007. “In the Presence of the Text: A Note on Writing, Speaking, and Performing in the Theodore Psalter.” In *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, edited by E. James, 83–99 (Cambridge).
- Bernabò, M. 2010. *La collezione di testi chirurgici di Niceta: Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 74.7: Tradizione medica classica a Bisanzio* (Rome).

- Bianchi Bandinelli, R. 1955. *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana)* (Olten)
- Boeck, E. N. 2015. *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge).
- Brubaker, L. 2006. "The *Christian Topography* (Vat.gr. 699) Revisited: Image, Text and Conflict in Ninth-Century Byzantium." In *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, edited by E. Jeffreys, 3–24 (Cambridge).
- Brubaker, L. 2002. "The Vienna Dioscorides and Anicia Juliana." In *Byzantine Garden Culture*, edited by A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, 189–214 (Washington, DC).
- Burke, J. 2006. "The Madrid Skylitzes as an Audio-Visual Experiment." In *Byzantine Narrative*, edited by J. Burke et. al, 137–48 (Melbourne).
- Camille, M. 1989. "Visual Signs of the Sacred Page: Books in the *Bible moralisée*." *Word and Image* 5: 111–30.
- Chrysochoou, S. 2014. "Ptolemy's Geography in Byzantium." In *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Reception of Antiquity in Byzantium, with Emphasis on the Palaeologan Era*, edited by G. Xanthaki-Karamanou, 247–71 (Athens).
- Cutler, A. 1995. "Originality as a Cultural Phenomenon." In *Originality and Innovation in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music*, edited by A. R. Littlewood, 203–16 (Oxford).
- Dujcev, I. 1963. *The Miniatures of the Chronicle of Manasses* (Sofia).
- Gibbons, Ann. 2017. "Goats, Bookworms, a Monk's Kiss: Biologists Reveal the Hidden History of an Ancient Gospels." *Science* 25 July.
- Knjazewskaja, O. 1995. "The Chronicle of George Hamartolos: An Old Russian Manuscript of the 14th Century." *Polata Knigopisnaia* 27–28: 90–112.
- Lazaris, S. 1995. "L'illustration scientifique à Byzance: le Parisinus graecus 2244, ff.1–74." *Études Balkaniques* 163–94.
- Lazaris, S. 2005. "Le Physiologus grec et son illustration: Quelques considerations à propos d'un nouveau témoin illustré (Dujcev. Gr.297)." In *Bestiaires médiévaux: Nouvelles perspectives sur les manuscrits et les traditions textuelles*, edited by B. van den Ebee, 141–67 (Turnhout).
- Maguire, E. D., and H. Maguire 2007. *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton).
- Maguire, H. 1981. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Maguire, H. 1999. "The Profane Aesthetic in Byzantine Art and Literature." *DOP* 53: 180–205.
- Mullett, M. 2003. "Rhetoric, Theory, and the Imperative of Performance: Byzantium and Now." In *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, edited by E. Jeffreys, 151–71 (London).
- Nelson, R. S. 2000. "To Say and to See: Ekphrasis and Vision in Byzantium." In *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance: See as Others Saw*, edited by R. Nelson, 143–68 (Cambridge).
- Oikonomides, N. 1992. "Hē stolē tou Eparchou kai ho Skylitzes tas Madrite." In *Euphrosynon. Apheroma ston Manole Chatzedake*, edited by E. Kipraiou and M. Chatzidakis, 422–33 (Athens).
- Radzivilovskaya letopis. 1994 *Tekst, issledovanie, opisanie miniatyur* (St. Petersburg)
- Spatharakis, I. 2004. *The Illustrations of the Cynegetica in Venice: Codex Marcianus graecus 479* (Leiden).
- Strzygowski, J. 1899. *Der Bilderkreis des griechischen Physiologus*. *Byzantinische Archiv* 2. (Leipzig).
- Sullivan, D. F. 2000. *Siegecraft: Two Tenth-Century Instructional Manuals by "Heron of Byzantium"*. *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 36 (Washington, DC).

- Rudy, K. 2013. "The Secret Lives of Medieval Manuscripts," TedX @ St. Andrew's University: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFYNowa2jxs>.
- Tolochko, O. 2013. "Notes on the Radziwill Codex." *Studi Slavistici* 10: 29–42.
- Trahoulia, N. S. 2010. "The Venice Alexander Romance: Pictorial Narrative and the Art of Telling Stories." In *History as Literature in Byzantium*, edited by R. Macrides, 145–65 (Farnham).
- Tsamakda, V. 2002. *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid* (Leiden).
- Touwaide, A. 2009. "Byzantine Medical Manuscripts: Towards a New Catalogue, with a Specimen for an Annotated Checklist of Manuscripts Based on an Index of Diels' Catalogue." *Byzantion* 79: 453–595.
- Weitzmann, K. 1952. "The Greek Sources of Islamic Scientific Illustrations." *Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld* (Locust Valley, NY); reprinted in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. H. L. Kessler (Chicago, 1971), 20–44.
- Wolska-Conus, W., ed. and trans. 1968, 1970, 1973. *Cosmas Indicopleustès, Topographie chrétienne*, 3 vols. *Sources chrétiennes*, 141, 159, 197 (Paris).
- Xyngopoulos, A. 196. *Les miniatures du Roman d'Alexandre le Grand dans le codex de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise* (Athens and Venice).

## CHAPTER 31

---

# LITURGICAL OBJECTS

---

HOLGER A. KLEIN

## INTRODUCTION

---

WHEN Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 306–337) built and lavishly endowed a new church for the bishop of Rome in 312/313, his gifts included, apart from the church itself and the land on which it stood, the proceeds from various other land donations and a large number of furnishings and objects for the celebration of the liturgy. The so-called *Liber Pontificalis*, a compendium of papal biographies first compiled from earlier lists and historical sources during the pontificate of Pope Damasus I (366–384) and later expanded several times during the medieval period, records these impressive gifts as follows:

a hammered silver canopy, or colonnaded screen (*fastigium*) [. . .] weighing 2025 pounds of burnished silver; the vault of finest gold; and hanging beneath the fastigium, a light of finest gold with 50 lamps of finest gold weighing 50 pounds, with chains weighing 25 pounds. [. . .] 7 altars of finest silver each weighing 200 pounds; 7 gold patens (*patenae*) each weighing 30 pounds; 16 silver patens each weighing 30 pounds; 7 large cups (*scyphi*) of finest gold each weighing 10 pounds; a special cup of hard coral [. . .]; 20 large silver cups each weighing 15 pounds; 2 large wine-vessels (*amae*) of fine gold, each weighing 50 pounds; 20 silver wine-vessels each weighing 10 pounds [. . .]; 40 smaller chalices (*calices minores*) of finest gold each weighing 1 pound; 50 smaller service chalices (*calices minores ministeriales*) each weighing 2 pounds. Adornment in the basilica: a chandelier (*farus cantharus*) of finest gold in front of the altar, in which pure nard-oil is burnt, with 80 lamps, weighing 30 pounds; a silver chandelier with 20 lamps, weighing 50 pounds [. . .]; 45 silver chandeliers in the body of the basilica, each weighing 30 pounds [. . .]; 40 silver lights on the right side of the basilica, each weighing 20 pounds; 25 silver chandeliers on the left of the basilica, each weighing 20 pounds; 50 silver candlestick chandeliers (*canthara cirostata*) in the body of the basilica, each weighing 20 pounds; 3 large jars of finest silver each weighing 300 pounds; 7 brass candelabra (*candelabra*) in front of the

altars, 10 feet high, adorned with medallions of the prophets inlaid with silver, each weighing 300 pounds. (*Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1:173; transl. adapted from *Book of Pontiffs*, transl. Davis, 16–17)

Lavish gifts for the celebration of the liturgy are attested to not only for the Lateran Basilica, where the grand total of imperial gifts amounted to 10,875 pounds of silver, but also for a good number of other churches Constantine founded and endowed in and outside Rome and elsewhere in Italy and the empire. He thus established an example of imperial munificence and charitable giving to ecclesiastical foundations that was followed by many of his successors throughout the history of the Late Roman and Byzantine Empire, most famously by Emperor Justinian the Great (r. 527–565), who reportedly endowed the newly rebuilt church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople with a treasure of gold, silver, and precious stones and embellished “that part of the church which is especially sacred and accessible to priests only, namely the sanctuary, with 40,000 pounds of silver” (Procopius, *De aedificiis*, ed. Haury, vol. 4:15; trans. adapted from *ArtByzEmp*, 76; Boyd 1998). It was also emulated, if on a more modest scale, by a wide range of elite secular and ecclesiastical donors, who often dedicated their gifts to local churches in fulfillment of a vow, in thanksgiving, for the repose and salvation of the souls of close family members, or in anticipation of earning their very own heavenly reward.

## THE LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY BYZANTINE PERIODS

---

By the fourth century, ecclesiastical furnishings (altars and altar canopies, lamps, chandeliers, and candlesticks) and objects used for the preparation and celebration of the Eucharistic rites (various vessels for water and wine and plates, or patens, for the Eucharistic bread) are documented in both the material and written record, providing us with precious, if fragmentary, evidence for Christian liturgical practices as well as for the ideals and realities of charitable gift giving during the Late Antique period (SanPietro 2014). Textual sources such as the *Liber Pontificalis* recount land donations that provided a steady stream of income to support the daily operations of ecclesiastical foundations along with offerings of books, textiles, and metalwork objects for use in the liturgy. Such objects were commonly stored in secure rooms within churches or immediately adjacent to them. Early inventories, such as the list of objects from a house that served the bishop and Christian community at Circa (Constantina) in Numidia as its primary place of worship around 303, record not only a substantial number of shoes and articles of clothing for both men and women, perhaps given as charitable donations, but also many silver and bronze vessels and lamps (*Gesta apud Zenophilum*, ed. Maier, 1:219; Optatus, *Against the Donatists*, transl. Edwards, 154). According to this source, these

objects, together with a large codex, were kept in various rooms of the private residence that seems to have doubled as a house of worship.

Later in the fourth century, the *Apostolic Constitutions* (*Const. Apost.*, II, 57.3, ed. Funk, 161), mention dedicated rooms for the storage of liturgical books, robes, and vessels, which are identified as *pastophoria* (παστοφόρια) and described as being located in the eastern part of the church. In Greek sources from the seventh century CE onward, storerooms of churches are usually called σκευοφυλάκια, quite literally identifying them as “places to keep the vessels” destined for use in the liturgical service (Gr. σκεύη λειτουργικά).

## THE EVIDENCE OF SILVER HOARDS

Material evidence for the physical appearance and formal variety of the kinds of vessels described in the written sources has been preserved from across the vast expanse of the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire, where hoards of church silver, buried for safekeeping in times of crisis or invasion, have been unearthed in the more recent past (Painter 1977; Mundell Mango 1986). While hoards of liturgical silver constitute only about 3 percent of all single-component hoards from the early third to the late seventh centuries, and just 6.1 percent of mixed component deposits (Hobbs 2006, 8; SanPietro 2014, 162), some forty church treasures that survive from the Italian peninsula, Gaul, Britain, Asia Minor, Syria, North Africa, and elsewhere provide us with a reasonably broad spectrum of information about the overall composition of Late Antique and Early Byzantine church treasures, the social context from which their donors emerged, and the artistic techniques and traditions employed in their manufacture (Leader-Newby 2004).

Among the earliest objects of liturgical silver to survive from a treasure trove are those found in 1975 near the Roman town of Durobrivae in Britain; now preserved at the British Museum in London, this is commonly known as the Water Newton Treasure (Figure 31.1) (Painter 1977; Painter 1999). Consisting of one gold and twenty-seven silver objects as well as four gold coins, this hoard features nineteen votive plaques and nine silver vessels, likely made during the second half of the fourth century. They include a jug, richly decorated with acanthus leaves, a deep large plate with a faintly incised christogram, or *chrismon*, between alpha and omega at the center, a two-handled chalice or *kantharos*, a strainer, and three cups or bowls, two of which feature incised votive or dedicatory inscriptions. One of the deep silver cups bears the inscription SANCTVM ALTARE TVVM D AXPΩ OMINE SVBNIXVS HONORO AXPΩ (Your sacred altar, Lord, I honor as your servant) along its slightly concave upper rim and the name PVBLIANVS on its bottom, whereas another is inscribed with the words INNOCENTIA ET VIVENTIA [. . .]RVNT AXPΩ (Innocentia and Viventia have [dedicated/presented this]). The ubiquitous presence of christograms on both the votive plaques and vessels leaves no doubt that these objects once belonged to a Christian shrine or sanctuary in the area. However, the vessels' use in the service of the liturgy can only be suggested as a





FIGURE 31.1. The Water Newton Treasure, likely deposited in the second half of the fourth century. Group image of Water Newton Hoard. The British Museum, London. © Trustees of the British Museum.

strong possibility, since direct and unequivocal evidence for their intended function is lacking (Painter 1999).

As with the Water Newton Treasure, it is often difficult to determine whether Early Byzantine silverware found as part of a hoard was originally intended for domestic or liturgical use. Dedicatory inscriptions or the use of Christian symbols can be ambiguous, as the case of the so-called Canoscio Treasure reveals (Giovagnoli 1935; Giovagnoli 1940; Engemann 1972). Found in a field near Città di Castello in 1934, the hoard consists of a total of twenty-four silver objects. While the majority feature Christian symbols, neither the preserved epigraphic reference to AELIANVS and FELICITAS on one of the smaller plates nor the dedicatory inscription DE DONIS DEI ET SANCTI MARTYRIS AGAPITI VTERE FELIX (From the gifts of God and the saintly martyr Agapitus, use it favorably!) on one of the larger plates clarifies their intended original function as domestic or liturgical vessels beyond reasonable doubt. The fluidity that existed in the employment of object types, epigraphic conventions, and symbolic forms across precious silver vessels made for domestic use by elite Christian patrons and vessels created for the Eucharistic service thus calls into question the categorical separation of these two realms, at least during the fourth and early fifth centuries, when workshops produced luxury vessels for a wide range of private and institutional clients of Christian and more traditional religious backgrounds.

Hoard finds from the later fifth through the seventh centuries preserve ample evidence for private individuals and members of the higher and lower clergy donating silver vessels to their local churches to serve in the Eucharistic liturgy. A large paten (diam.

61 cm), found in 1912 as part of a mixed treasure hoard in Malaja Pereščepina in the Poltava district (Ukraine), carries the inscription + EX ANTIQVIS RENOVATVM EST PER PATERNVM REVERENTISS(IMVM) EPISC(OPVM) NOSTRVN AMEN (From older [materials] restored for Paternus, our most reverend bishop, Amen), a likely reference to the early sixth-century bishop Paternus of Tomis, for whom this lavish silver-gilt paten with a central chrismon between alpha and omega and an inhabited vine scroll in *repoussé* was made, or rather, restored (Matzulevitsch 1929, 101–7; Effenberger 1978, 138–41; Werner 1984; Bank 1985, 280–81).

Three silver chalices, each decorated with repoussé medallions depicting Sts. Peter and Paul between a youthful Christ and the Virgin, and a lathe-turned silver paten (diam. 32.4 cm) form what is now known as the Beth Misona Treasure in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figure 31.2) (Mundell Mango 1986, 228–31; Klein 2007, 52–53). A Greek dedicatory inscription surrounding the engraved central cross on the paten reveals the identity of both the individual who offered the gift and the church and saint who received it: + ΕΥΞΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΔΟΜΝΟΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΖΑΧΕΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΗΝΕΝΚΕΝ ΤΩ ΑΓΙΩ ΣΕΡΓΙΩ ΧΩ[Ρ]ΙΟΥ ΒΕΘ ΜΙΣΩΝΑ (Having vowed, Domnos, son of Zacheos, has offered [this paten] to [the church of] St. Sergios of the village of Beth Misona). An inscription on one of the chalices reads: ΠΡ[Ε]ΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ] ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΔΟΜΝΟΥ ΤΩ ΑΓΙΩ ΣΕΡΓΙΩ ΕΠΙ ΖΗΝΩΝΟΣ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΥ (The priest Kyriakos, son of



FIGURE 31.2. The Beth Misona Treasure, 6th–7th century. Group image of Beth Misona Treasure. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1950.378–81.

Domnos, [offered this chalice] to St. Sergios under Zeno the priest), thus naming the donor of the vessel and his father as well as the priest serving the church that received the pious gift.

A chalice with a tall, full-bottom cup and a broad-rimmed paten (diam. 20.3 cm) were discovered as part of a silver hoard outside the town of Galognano in Tuscany in 1963 (Mundell Mango 1986, 250–54). Each carries an inscription, executed in pointillé, a decorative technique in which the letters are rendered by means of punched dots, and niello, respectively. The one on the chalice reads, HVNC CALICE PVSVET HIMNIGILDA AECLISIAE GALLVNIANI (Himnigilda gave this chalice to the church of Gallunianu) while the one on the paten states, SIVEGERNA PRO ANIMAM SVAM FECIT (Sivegerna made this for [the salvation of] her soul), thus indicating that local elites across the vast expanse of the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire were active participants in a pan-Mediterranean culture of Christian charitable giving that provided churches large and small with precious vessels for liturgical and para-liturgical use, that is, functions that are not strictly part of the liturgical service.

Wrought from fine silver and adorned in various techniques such as niello, gilding, engraving, etching, and repoussé work, chalices (Lat. *calix*; Gr. σκύφοι) and patens (Lat. *patenae*; Gr. δίσκοι) were certainly the most essential vessels for the celebration of the Eucharist. As sets, they were known as *diskopotēria* (Gr. δισκοποτήρια) and are mentioned in literary sources since the seventh century (*Life of Theodor of Sykeon*, ch. 42, ed. Festugière, 37; transl. Dawes and Baynes 1977, 117–18). While generally comparable in formal appearance, their shapes, sizes, and details of decoration could vary considerably depending on established workshop practices, the wishes of individual patrons, and the overall prestige of the commission. The most spectacular early Byzantine treasure hoards discovered to date—the reconstructed Kaper Koraon Treasure (Mundell Mango 1986), the Sion Treasure (Firatlı 1969; Boyd 1992), and the Attarouthi Treasure (Frazer 1988; Wixom 1999, no. 46, 37–38)—illustrate the broad range of possibilities available to elite patrons in the regions of Asia Minor and Syria alone, with patens from the church of Holy Sion and the chalices from the church of St. Stephen at Attarouthi preserving some of the finest examples of liturgical silverware from the sixth and seventh centuries.

Chalices and patens were by no means the only types of sacred vessels (*vasa sacra*) used in the Eucharistic rites during the Late Roman and Byzantine periods. Precious silver spoons (Lat. *cochlearia*, *ligulae*; Gr. κοχλιάρια, λαβίδες) must likewise be considered as part of the group of liturgical vessels that came into direct contact with the consecrated Eucharistic offerings (Braun 1932, 270–79; Hauser 1992). While early literary evidence for the liturgical use of spoons is lacking, four inscribed spoons in the reconstituted Kaper Koraon Treasure seem to indicate that they were indeed donated to serve a liturgical purpose (Mundell Mango 1986, no. 18–22, 118–27), likely to stir or distribute the Eucharistic wine. Patens could be accompanied by an object known as *asterisk* (Gr. ἀστερίσκος), quite literally a “little star” that was placed on the paten to support a textile veil, commonly known as a *diskokalymma* (Gr. Δισκοκαλύμμα), to protect the consecrated bread from flies and other insects. One of the earliest examples of a

liturgical asterisk to survive was found as part of the sixth-century Sion Treasure, but the practice of using such devices may date back even further.

Other objects used in the preparation of the Eucharistic offerings, such as ewers, flasks, pitchers, strainers, and ladles, have been preserved in sufficient numbers to provide a fairly good understanding of their formal variety and artistic decoration (for nomenclature and specific examples, see Mundell Mango 1986). However, caution is necessary in identifying such objects as “liturgical” based on their formal characteristics or decoration alone. Especially in this early period, objects originally made for elite domestic use could quite easily be adopted for a new liturgical function after being donated to a church in fulfillment of a vow or as a bequest. The absence of specific Christian figural or symbolic representations on such items neither can be taken as evidence for their exclusive domestic use, nor can the presence of Christian decorative elements be taken as unequivocal evidence for their liturgical use. A spectacular early fifth-century polygonal silver ewer (h. 50.2 cm) with intricate gold and niello decoration featuring representations of the twelve apostles in figural and symbolic form may serve as a case in point (Kaufmann-Heinimann and Martin 2017). Discovered in a rescue excavation on the western fringes of the city of Trier in 1992, the so-called *Apostelkanne* very likely formed part of a larger domestic silver hoard found in the same area in 1628 (subsequently melted down). Despite its Christian iconographic program, there is no evidence or context to support the idea that the ewer may have served a liturgical function. A liturgical function can, on the other hand, be made likely for the ewer that was found as part of the Water Newton treasure. While this ewer’s lavish acanthus decoration bears no trace of Christian iconography, its find context with other vessels dedicated for use in a Christian liturgical context makes such a function considerably more likely (Painter 1997). The same holds true for finely wrought silver spoons, ladles, and strainers, which have survived in considerable number both as part of ecclesiastical and domestic silver hoards and outside of known find contexts. Like objects serving their Christian owners in a domestic setting, those used in the preparation of the Eucharistic offerings could be decorated with Christian figural or symbolic representations and inscribed with the name or names of elite patrons, or remain completely unadorned. Only where such items are marked as the property of a saint or church or identified as gifts made in fulfillment of a vow or in expectation of a future heavenly reward can their intended original function as liturgical objects be more convincingly ascertained.

In the sanctuary, these sacred vessels and utensils for the preparation of the Eucharistic offerings were commonly joined by other objects necessary for the celebration of the liturgy, namely liturgical books and fans (Lat. *flabella*; Gr. *ριπίδια*), ewers and basins for ritual washings, censers, crosses, and lamps (or candelabra), as well as liturgical furnishings such as the altar table itself, a canopy or *ciborium* above the altar, and seats for the officiating clergy. The representation of the Communion of the Apostles on the so-called Riha paten (Mundell Mango 1986, 165–70) and select silver objects preserved as part of the reconstituted Kaper Koraon and Sion treasures with their crosses and fans, open-work lamps and *polykandela*, altar revetments, book covers, and incense burners or censers, attest to the lavishness of such early Byzantine liturgical objects,

furnishings, and fixtures as well as their architectural setting (Boyd and Mundell Mango, eds. 1986; Mundell Mango 1986, 147–51).

Evidence for the appreciation of incense and the use of censers in liturgical celebrations is available from the fourth century onward. In the city of Rome, Emperor Constantine the Great is known to have donated “two censers (*thymiamateria*) of the finest gold weighing 30 pounds” to the Lateran basilica (*Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1:174; transl. adapted from Davis 2000, 18); at the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, the pious pilgrim Egeria witnessed the clergy “taking censers (*thiamataria*) into the cave of the Anastasis so that the whole Anastasis basilica is filled with the smell” (Egeria, *Itin.*, 24.10, ed. Maraval, 244; *Egeria’s Travels*, transl. Wilkinson, 144). Despite initial hesitations and imperial legislation against the use of incense in certain pagan ritual contexts (Cod. Theod., 16.10.12, ed. Mommsen and Meyer, vol. 1.2, 900–1, transl. after Pharr, 473–74), the use of censers seems to have become a widespread Christian liturgical practice by the fifth century (DACL V.1, 2–33; Billod 1987; Richter-Siebels 1990). Material evidence from sixth- and seventh-century ecclesiastical silver hoards attests to lavish censers of various types (suspended on chains, or with supports for placement on flat surfaces) and forms (cylindrical, polygonal, etc.), decorated in a variety of artistic techniques (chased, gilded, nielloed, etc.) to display vegetal, zoomorphic, and anthropomorphic elements including portrait busts and narrative Christological scenes. More common than censers made of gold and silver, however, were those cast in bronze (Wamser and Zahlhaas 1998, 39–49).

Literary sources provide additional evidence for the more specific circumstances of donations made to churches across the empire. For Ravenna, the pool of available information is particularly rich. And while the *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis* (compiled during the first half of the ninth century) is not an unproblematic source, one must not ignore the acts of pious patronage it records. Empress Galla Placidia (r. 423–437) is said to have “offered many gifts to the church of Ravenna and made a lamp with a candelabrum (*lucernam cum cereostato*) of purest gold weighing, as some say, in public weight seven pounds, made with her likeness in a medallion in the scene-painters’ art and around it reading, ‘I will prepare a lamp for my Christ’” (Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Eccl. Rav.*, ch. 27, ed. Deliyannis, 174; Agnellus, *Book of Potiffs*, transl. Deliyannis, 124). She also aided her niece in building a church in honor of St. Zacharias, and “consecrated and endowed it with gold and silver and golden crowns (*coronis aureis*) and most precious gems and gold chalices (*calicibus aureis*), which come out in procession on the Nativity of the Lord” (Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Eccl. Rav.*, ch. 41, 149; transl. Deliyannis, 149). Members of the imperial court in Ravenna, however, did not represent the only high-profile donors commissioning objects of fine metalwork for Ravenna’s churches. Bishop Peter is likewise credited to have made “covers for the Gospels from the best gold and brightest gems” (Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Eccl. Rav.*, ch. 27, 174; transl. Deliyannis 2004, 124). Even though they have not survived, they were probably no less splendid than the book covers from the Sion Treasure. While it is difficult to determine whether these episcopal gifts were produced by local artists or imported from elsewhere, Ravenna is as likely as a place of origin for such fine metalwork objects as

is Rome or Constantinople. Other gifts are recorded from the same time. Candelabra, book covers, and votive crowns made from gold and silver, and decorated with precious and semiprecious stones, are the kinds of objects one would expect to find as pious donation from members of the imperial family and high-ranking ecclesiastical figures. They are further supplemented in this account by other, more elaborate objects and liturgical furnishings, mentioned in adjacent biographies of bishops whose reign stretched across the periods of Ostrogothic and Byzantine rule in Ravenna (Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Eccl. Rav.*, ch. 66, 235–36; transl. Deliyannis 2004, 181). One silver ciborium, decorated above its arches with a lengthy dedicatory inscription according to Agnellus, calls to mind the great silver ciborium Justinian himself commissioned for the main altar of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, vividly described by Paul the Silentiary in his *ekphrastic* poem on the Great Church (Paulus Silentiarius, *Descr. S. Sophiae*, 720–54, ed. Friedländer, 247–48; transl. in *ArtByzEmp*, 88).

The exceptional craftsmanship attributed to these objects matches the expense and importance of a number of other donations mentioned in Agnellus' account, most notably Maximian's: "And he ordered a great cross of gold [. . .] decorated with most precious gems and pearls, hyacinths and amethysts, and sardonyx and emeralds, and in the middle part of the cross, set in gold, he placed some of the wood of our holy redeeming cross, where the body of the Lord hung. And it is a very great weight of gold" (Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Eccl. Rav.*, ch. 80, 248–9; transl. Deliyannis 2004, 194). As Deichmann and others have cautioned, Agnellus' testimony should not always be taken at face value when it comes to the material makeup of the objects in question (Deichmann 1989, 351). While some may indeed have been made of pure gold, others were perhaps more likely made of gilded silver. A reflection of the type of cross mentioned by Agnellus may be seen in one of the imperial panels at San Vitale, namely the one that depicts Maximian prominently in the presence of Justinian and his court. Since Maximian's likeness was likely inserted into the imperial panel to replace the image of his immediate predecessor Victor, the depiction of the gem-studded cross in this context may not be a reflection of any specific donation by Maximian (Andreescu-Treadgold and Treadgold 1997). The representation could likewise have inspired the description in Agnellus' account.

The gradual collapse of Roman rule and administrative structures in the Western half of the empire during the fifth century must have had a profound impact also on the production and dissemination of fine metalwork. While the manufacture of silver objects for liturgical and domestic use is likely to have continued in major urban centers, especially those with active mints, like Rome and Ravenna, into the sixth and seventh centuries, few surviving objects can be attributed to specific locations and workshops with certainty. In Constantinople, on the other hand, and other cities in the Eastern half of the empire, the production of fine metalwork seems to have continued largely unchanged into the second half of the seventh century. Since precious metals were subject to state control, ingots and objects destined for distribution were customarily marked by the office of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*. From the late fifth through the seventh centuries, this imperial office used a system of silver stamps to approve objects and raw materials for circulation (Cruikshank Dodd 1961), which helps to establish a

basic chronology for the production of fine silver in the Early Byzantine Empire. The loss of Syria and Egypt during the reign of Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641) and the fall of the Sassanian Empire to Arab invaders in 642 CE contributed to the steady decline of the production of fine silver vessels of the “classical kind” over the next decades (Matzulevich 1929; Mundell Mango 1997).

## THE MIDDLE AND LATE BYZANTINE PERIODS

---

While material evidence for the production of elegant metalwork is sparse for the period of Iconoclasm, contemporary and later written sources indicate that precious metalwork objects, including liturgical vessels, continued to be commissioned and produced in Constantinople during the eighth and ninth centuries (Brubaker-Haldon 2001, 109–15). An anonymous tenth-century description of the Church of the Virgin of the Life-giving Spring (Ζωοδόχος Πηγή), for instance, records that during their joint reign empress Irene (r. 780–802) and her son Constantine VI (r. 780–797) “dedicated [to the church] woven veils of gold and curtains of gold thread as well as a crown and vessels for the bloodless sacrifice decorated with [precious] stones and pearls” (*De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem*, 880; transl. adapted from *ArtByzEmp*, 156–57). The fact that these objects are described as “decorated with stones and pearls” alludes to a new aesthetic and artistic trend in the production of high-end liturgical objects during this period, namely the visual and material enhancement of silver and gold objects through the addition of precious or semiprecious stones, enamel, and niello inlay work (see Bosselmann-Ruickbie chapter, this volume).

Small-scale objects like the “Fieschi-Morgan Staurotheke” (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.715 a,b; *Byzantium*, 330–1453, no. 52) or the “Pliska Cross” (Sofia, National Archaeological Museum, 4882) provide vivid testimony for the existence of highly accomplished workshops of gold- and silversmiths in ninth-century Constantinople, which produced liturgical and devotional objects of the highest quality for the most distinguished clients.

Well known is the description of the five-towered cupboard, or *Pentapyrgion* (Gr. πενταπύργιον) in the throne room of the Great Palace in Constantinople. Emperor Theophilos (r. 829–842), “a lover of adornment, had it made by the master of the mint” (Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, ed. Bekker, 215; trans. adapted from Mango 1986, 160) for the display of precious objects from the treasury (Featherstone 2007). Together with the emperor’s hydraulic “lion throne,” the golden tree with its chirping mechanical birds, the “beautiful door” at the southwest entrance to the inner narthex of Hagia Sophia (Swift 1937), the golden griffins, lions, and organ melted down by his son and successor Michael III (r. 842–867), the objects produced during the reign of Theophilos attest not only to the emperor’s taste for fine metalwork and his ability to procure them from local workshops, but also, if more indirectly, to the rich array of liturgical objects

that must have been produced during this period for the churches in and outside the imperial palace and for the high-ranking members of the clergy who served them.

Among the liturgical objects from this period are a late ninth- or early tenth-century sardonyx paten (Paris, Musée du Louvre, OA11878), the remains of a votive crown (Venice, Procuratoria di San Marco, Tesoro 116), associated with Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912), and an enameled book cover (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana Ms. Lat. Cl. I, 101; Hahnloser 1971, no. 35, 47–48), all decorated with *Vollschmelz cloisonné* enamels of a type first encountered in the “Fieschi Morgan Stauratheke” and a number of related ninth-century Western objects (see Bosselmann-Ruickbie chapter, this volume). The use of different materials and artistic techniques such as hard-stone carving, cloisonné enamel work, and niello decoration in combination with gilded silver frames or mounts for precious stones and pearls betrays both an exceptional artistic ability and sophistication as well as a new taste for material variety, rich surface textures, and vibrant polychromies that became a hallmark of precious Middle Byzantine metalwork for several centuries to come. An impressive number of exquisite tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantine objects have been preserved in the treasury of San Marco, where they probably arrived shortly after the Crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204 and the subsequent looting of its churches, shrines, and treasuries (for an overview, see Buckton 1985). These eucharistic vessels convey a good sense of the refined taste, artistic accomplishment, and aesthetic judgment of Byzantine artists and patrons of the highest rank.

A gilded, silver-mounted agate cup (Venice, Procuratoria di San Marco, Tesoro 83; Hahnloser 1971, no. 57, 67), commissioned by a high court official around 960, is inscribed with the words + ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΔΙΔΩΣΙΝ ΑΙΜΑ ΤΟ ΣΩΗΝ ΦΕΡΟΝ (Christ gives his blood, which brings life) and Κ[ΥΡ]ΙΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΣΙΣΙΝΝΙΩ Π[Α]ΤΡΙΚΙΩ Κ[ΑΙ] ΓΕΝΙΚΩ ΛΟΓΟΘΕΤ[Η] (Lord, help Sisinnios, the Patrikios and Logothete of the Genikon), attesting to both the longevity of the formal characteristics of such vessels (compare the kantharos in the Water Newton Treasure) and subtle changes in the epigraphic conventions and formulae associated with high-level donations to churches and their treasuries. In addition to the names of specific emperors or high-ranking court and ecclesiastical officials, liturgical vessels are now often inscribed with liturgical formulae. A spectacular sardonyx chalice (Venice, Procuratoria di San Marco, Tesoro 69, Hahnloser 1971, no. 40, 58–59), decorated with *Senkschmelz cloisonné* enamel portraits of four prominent Christian martyrs (Demetrios, Prokopios, Theodore, and Akyndinos), three patriarchs (John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzenos, and Ignatios the Younger), and one bishop (Theophylact of Nicomedia), was thus inscribed with the words + ΠΙΕΤΕ ΕΞ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΤ[ΕΣ] ΤΟΥΤ[Ο] Μ[ΟΥ] ΕΣΤ[Ι] ΤΟ ΑΙΜΑ Τ[Ο] ΤΗΣ Κ[ΑΙ]ΝΗΣ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗΣ Τ[Ο] ΥΠΕΡ ΥΜ[ΩΝ] Κ[ΑΙ] ΠΟΛΛΩΝ ΕΚΧΥΝΟΜ[ΕΝΟΝ] ΕΙΣ ΑΦΕΣΙΝ ΑΜΑΡΤ[ΙΩΝ] (Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which was shed for you and many for the remission of sins) (Figure 31.3).

Other precious liturgical objects commissioned during the Middle Byzantine period show that a taste for hard-stone vessels and their decoration with precious or semiprecious stones, pearls, and figural or ornamental enamels was by no means





FIGURE 31.3. Sardonyx chalice (Santuuario 69), late tenth–early eleventh century. Sardonyx Chalice of the Apostles. Tesoro di San Marco, Venice, Santuario 69. © Courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco, Venice.

exclusive. A large gilded silver paten (Halberstadt, Domschatz, Inv. no. 36, diam. 41.4 cm), brought to Halberstadt (Germany) in 1205 by its crusading bishop Konrad of Krosigk, a well-known participant in the conquest of Constantinople, was likely produced in a Constantinopolitan workshop during the later eleventh or, more likely perhaps, the twelfth century (Figure 31.4) (Janke 2006, no. 21, 216–19; Meller et. al 2008, no. 20, 90–93; Hecht 2011). With its lavish decoration of winding acanthus scrolls, sixteen medallions depicting holy bishops and martyrs on its flat rim and the walls of its sloping cusps, and a central representation of Christ's crucifixion attended by two angels above and the mourning Virgin and St. John beneath the cross, the paten follows pre-Iconoclastic examples in its material makeup, formal disposition, and the use of decorative techniques. However, the lengthy inscription encircling the Crucifixion adheres to contemporary practices by spelling out the words of the liturgy: + ΛΑΒΕΤΕ ΦΑΓΕΤΕ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΤΟ ΣΩΜΑ ΜΟΥ ΤΟ ΥΠΕΡ ΥΜΩΝ ΚΛΩΜΕΝΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΑΦΕΣΙΝ ΑΜΑΡΤΙΩΝ (Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of



FIGURE 31.4. Liturgical diskos, eleventh–twelfth century. Domschatz, Halberstadt, Inv. no. 36. © Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt, Juraj Lipták.

sins). More common than such elaborate and costly examples, of course, were patens made of copper or bronze alloy, which often carried similar liturgical inscriptions but could be decorated with a wide array of figural representations of Christ, the Virgin, archangels, and individual saints (Sevrugian 1992).

Lamps, candelabra, and censers as well as crosses for processional and stationary use on altars continued to be commissioned and manufactured during the Middle Byzantine period as they had been before and during the period of Iconoclasm. Particularly lavish examples of golden pearl and gem-studded processional crosses are pictured in the *Menologion* of Emperor Basil II (Vatican, Cod. gr. 1613, 192) where they are carried in festive urban processions led by the emperor and/or the patriarch. A number of spectacular Middle Byzantine silver crosses have survived, and while it is often difficult to determine whether a specific cross was made for liturgical, military, or imperial ceremonial use, inscriptions and iconographic programs sometimes offer evidence for the historical or functional context in which such an object had served (Cotsonis 1994). The great

gem-encrusted silver cross on the altar of the Great Lavra on Mt. Athos, traditionally associated with the patronage of Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (r. 963–969), bears an inscription taken from Psalm 43:5: + EN ΣΟΙ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΧΘΡΟΥΣ ΗΜΩΝ / ΚΕΡΑΙΟΥΜΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΙ ΣΟΥ / ΕΞΟΥΔΕΝΩΣΜΕΝ ΤΟΥΣ / ΕΠΙΝΙΣΤΑΜΕΝΟΥΣ ΗΜΙΝ (With you we will push down our enemies, and in your name will we bring to naught them that rise up against us), indicating the possibility that this precious cross was originally made to function in an imperial or military setting before it was adopted for liturgical use (Grabar 1969; Cotsonis 1994, 11–14).

Votive inscriptions linking elite secular and ecclesiastical patrons to specific crosses are preserved or recorded for both more mundane examples made from copper alloy and more precious crosses executed in silver. Unlike processional crosses made during the sixth and seventh centuries in solid silver, those manufactured in the Middle Byzantine period often consisted of thin silver sheaths mounted over an iron core, soldered at the seams, and held together by elegant finials at the ends of each cross arm. The fragment of one of the finest surviving examples of such a cross (Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1970.36), likely made in the mid-eleventh century, was decorated in a variety of metalworking techniques. On the front, a central medallion shows the half-length figure of Christ Pantokratōr. As the source of life, Christ is placed at the center of an elaborate repoussé floral design with blossom motifs on a stippled gold ground. Placed at the ends of each horizontal cross arm are medallions with the busts of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, who address Christ in the classical pose of intercession and prayer, while the archangel Michael occupies the remaining medallion on the vertical cross arm. An inscription on the now missing lower cross arm once stated that “this precious cross was beautifully worked in the name of our blessed father Sabas by Nicholas, the monk, presbyter, and founder of the Monastery of Glastine,” thus identifying the cross’s pious donor (Cotsonis 1994, no. 2, 68–75; Klein 2007, no. 22, 80–81). On the back of the cross, the bust of St. Sabas, the “recipient” of the pious donation, is represented in a gilded repoussé medallion at the intersection of a floral cross, executed in niello on a stippled gold ground. He is surrounded by half- and full-length representations of six other Byzantine monastic saints, all inscribed and executed in niello with partial gilding. The recorded dedicatory inscription and iconographic program of the cross leave little doubt that it was made to serve a monastic community in a decidedly liturgical context.

The Crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204 must, in many ways, be considered a decisive rupture in the history of Byzantine art and culture, and while the production of fine metalwork for liturgical and other purposes did not cease completely during the thirteenth century, the political and economic climate in the Latin Empire of Romania and the various successor states of the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor and Greece can hardly be considered favorable for the commissioning and production of high-profile luxury objects. Of the precious liturgical vessels that have survived from the late thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, some truly outstanding examples are preserved in the monastic treasuries of Mt. Athos. An extraordinary jasper chalice with double handles in the shape of dragons from Vatopedi bears on its elegant octagonal foot four monograms that identify Manuel Kantakuzenos (r. 1349–1380), the despot of Morea as its patron (Figure 31.5) (*Treasures of Mt. Athos*, no. 9.14, 302–3; Loverdou-Tsigarida 1998, 475–81;



**FIGURE 31.5.** Jasper chalice of Manuel Kantakuzenos, mid-to-late fourteenth century. The Holy Monastery of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos, Greece. Photo courtesy of the Benaki Museum, Athens. Used with permission by the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo: George Poupis.

Drandaki 2013, no. 69, 149–150) The monograms alternate with medallions depicting the busts of four church fathers. The familiar inscription on the chalice's thin rim spells out the words of the liturgy, thus providing clear evidence for the liturgical use of the vessel. As with many objects produced during the Late Byzantine period, it remains difficult to determine whether the chalice of Manuel was made in a major artistic center such as Constantinople or Thessaloniki, or elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean. The presence of decidedly Western forms such as the polygonal stem and node and certain ornamental motifs point to an artist or workshop familiar with both Byzantine and Western metalworking practices and a willingness to fuse local with international trends that were likely transmitted via Venice and its colonial possessions overseas.

The same can be said for other objects preserved in the monastic treasuries of Mt. Athos, among them a chalice and paten at Vatopedi associated with Thomas Preljubović (r. 1366/67–1384), the Serbian despot of Ioannina (Figure 31.6/Color Plate 11B) (Ballian 2004; Durand 2004; Drandaki 2013, no. 70, 150–152). The use of *basse-taille* enameling, a technique practiced at a highly sophisticated level in Siena, Paris, Venice, and elsewhere in Western Europe throughout the fourteenth century, for the central scene of the Lamentation, a decidedly Byzantine iconographic subject, here labeled as Αποκαθελωσις (Deposition), reveals how forcefully Western artistic traditions and techniques had started to penetrate the Byzantine world by the mid-fourteenth century (Durand 2004; Durand 2017; Bosselmann 2018).



FIGURE 31.6 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 11B). Paten associated with Thomas Preljubović, second half of fourteenth century. Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo courtesy of the Benaki Museum, Athens. Used with permission by the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi. Photo: George Poupis.

Evidence for a Byzantine interest in the adaptation of Western artistic forms, motifs, and techniques can be found as early as the thirteenth century in both the pictorial arts and precious metalwork. A very humble liturgical object, namely a standing censer made of copper alloy and adorned with full-length representations of Sts. Theodore and Demetrios (Athens, Benaki Museum, 11469; *Faith and Power*, no. 65, 128–29), provides early testimony for such cultural and artistic transfer processes. The artist or workshop responsible for the execution of this object left the figures, foliage, and inscriptions in reserve while filling the excavated background with dark green and blue enamel in a technique known as *champlevé*. Long practiced and perfected in the Mosan region and in central France (Limoges) during the second half of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, *champlevé* enameling was likely introduced and popularized in the eastern

Mediterranean as a result of Western imports and the presence of artists trained abroad (Buckton 1988).

While many objects from the Middle and Late Byzantine periods are lost, our knowledge of their formal and iconographic variety is informed by their representation in contemporary churches and on liturgical textiles. Together with other implements, fans, chalices, and patens make frequent appearances in scenes of the Communion of the Apostles, the celebration of the Celestial Liturgy, and the Lamentation over Christ's body, as seen, for instance, in the eleventh-century apse mosaic of the church of Hagia Sophia in Kiev or a fourteenth-century embroidered *epitaphios* from Thessaloniki (Figure 38.4) (Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Buφ 57; *Faith and Power*, no. 187A, 312–13; see Woodfin chapter, this volume). These representations provide us with a valuable and lasting record of the liturgical celebrations in which the surviving objects once functioned and patiently performed their sacred duties.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

---

Scholarship on Late Antique and Byzantine liturgical objects is often scattered across exhibition and collection catalogues, monographic publications on single spectacular objects and treasure hoards, and a number of excellent PhD dissertations and monographs that issued from them. Much can be learned from a more comprehensive assessment and in-depth analysis of the surviving material and textual evidence. New insights may also be gained by paying closer attention to areas of contact between different Christian cultures or by transcending the established cultural and artistic boundaries our scholarly disciplines tend to impose and reinforce.

## REFERENCES

---

### Primary Sources

- Agnelli Ravennatis Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*. 2006. Edited by D. M. Deliyannis (Turnhout).
- Agnellus of Ravenna. *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*. 2004. Translated with an introduction by D. M. Deliyannis (Washington, DC).
- Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianvm pertinentes*. 1905. Edited by T. Mommsen and P. M. Meyer (Berlin).
- Égérie. Journal de voyage (Itinéraire)*. 1982. Edited by P. Maraval (Paris).
- Egeria's Travels*. 1999. Newly translated with supporting documents and notes by J. Wilkinson (Warminster).
- Gesta apud Zenophilum*, 1987–1989. Edited by J.-L. Maier. *Le dossier du donatisme*, 2 vols. (Berlin).
- Le Liber Pontificalis*. 1886–1892 (repr. 1981). Edited by L. Duchesne, 2 vols. (Paris).

- The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*. 2000. Translated with an introduction by R. Davis (Liverpool).
- Optatus. *Against the Donatists*. 1997. Translated by M. Edwards (Liverpool).
- Paulus Silentarius, Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius: *Kunstbeschreibungen Justinianischer Zeit*. 1912. Edited by P. Friedländer, 227–56 (Leipzig and Berlin).
- De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem*. 1978. In *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, III, 878ff.

## Secondary Sources

- Andreescu-Treadgold, I. and W. Treadgold. 1997. "Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale." *AB* 79: 708–23.
- ArtByzEmp*.
- Ballian, A. 2004. "Liturgical Implements." In *Faith and Power*, 117–24.
- Bank, A. V. 1985. *Byzantine Art in the Collections of the Soviet Museums* (Leningrad).
- Billod, C. 1987. "Les encensoirs syro-paléstiennes de Bâle." *Antike Kunst* 30: 39–56.
- Boyd, S. A. 1998. "Art in the Service of the Liturgy: Byzantine Silver Plate." In *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, edited by L. Safran, 152–85 (University Park, PA).
- Boyd, S. A. 1992. "A Metropolitan Treasure from a Church in the Provinces: An Introduction to the Study of the Sion Treasure." In *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, edited by S. A. Boyd and M. Mundell Mango, 5–37 (Washington, DC).
- Boyd, S., and M. Mundell Mango, eds. 1986. *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, Papers of the Symposium held May 16–18, 1986, at the Walters Art Gallery and Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, DC).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2018. "Contact between Byzantium and the West from the 9th to the 15th Century and Their Reflections in Goldsmiths' Works and Enamels." In *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge: Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen*. vol. 1, edited by F. Daim, D. Heher, and C. Rapp, 73–104 (Mainz).
- Braun, J. 1932. *Das christliche Altargerät in seinem Sein und seiner Entwicklung* (Munich).
- Brubaker L., and J. Haldon. 2001. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850): The Sources, An Annotated Survey* (Aldershot).
- Buckton, D., ed. 1985. *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
- Buckton, D. 1988. "Byzantine Enamel and the West." *ByzForsch* 13: 235–44.
- Byzantium*, 330–1453.
- Cotsonis, J. 1994. *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses* (Washington, DC).
- Cruikshank Dodd, E. 1961. *Byzantine Silver Stamps* (Washington, DC).
- Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*. 1907–1953. Edited by F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq. 15 vols. (Paris).
- Dawes, E., and N. Baynes. 1977. *Three Byzantine Saints*. 2nd ed., 88–192 (Crestwood, NY).
- Deichmann, F. W. 1989. *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*. Bd. 2/3 (Wiesbaden).
- Dodd, E. C. 1973. *Byzantine Silver Treasures* (Bern).
- Durand, J. 2004. "Innovations gothiques dans l'orfèvrerie byzantine sous les Paléologues." *DOP* 58: 333–54.
- Durand, J. 2017. "A propos de l'orfèvrerie byzantine sous les Paléologues." In *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, edited by H. A. Klein, V. Poletto, and P. Schreiner, 133–82 (Venice).

- Drandaki, A. et. al, eds. 2013. *Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections* (Athens, Washington, DC). Exhibition catalogue
- Effenberger, A., et. al, eds. 1978. *Spätantike und frühbyzantinische Silbergefäße aus der Staatlichen Ermitage Leningrad, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* (Berlin). Exhibition catalogue.
- Engemann, J. 1972. "Anmerkungen zu spätantiken Geräten des Alltagslebens mit christlichen Bildern, Symbolen und Inschriften." *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 15: 154–73.
- Faith and Power.*
- Featherstone, J. M. 2007. "ΔΙ' ΕΝΔΕΙΞΙΝ: Display in Court Ceremonial (De Ceremoniis, II, 15)." In *The Material and the Ideal: Essays in Medieval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean-Michel Spieser*, edited by A. Cutler and A. Papaconstantinou, 75–112 (Leiden and Boston).
- Firatli, N. 1969. "Un trésor du VIe siècle trouvé à Kumluca en Lycie." *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*, 523–25 (Trier).
- Frazer, E. E. 1988. "Silver Liturgical Objects from Attarouthi in Syria." *Abstracts of Papers, Fourteenth Byzantine Studies Conference, The Menil Collection and the University of St. Thomas*, 13–14 (Houston).
- Giovagnoli, E. 1935. "Il Tesoro Eucaristico di Canoscio." *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 12: 313–28.
- Giovagnoli, E. 1940. *Il Tesoro di Canoscio* (Città di Castello).
- Glory of Byzantium.*
- Grabar, A. 1969. "La précieuse croix de la lavra Saint-Athanase au Mont-Athos." *CA* 19: 99–125.
- Hahnloser, H. R. 1971. *Il tesoro di San Marco 2: Il tesoro e il museo, Florence* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
- Hauser, S. 1992. *Spätantike und frühbyzantinische Silberlöffel: Bemerkungen zur Produktion von Luxusgütern im 5. bis 7. Jahrhundert* (Münster).
- Hecht, C. 2011. *Von Byzanz nach Halberstadt: Der byzantinische Diskos des Halberstädter Domschatzes* (Halle).
- Hobbs, R. 2006. *Late Roman Precious Metal Deposits, c. AD 200–700: Changes over Time and Space* (Oxford).
- Janke, P. 2006. *Ein heilbringender Schatz: Reliquienverehrung am Halberstädter Dom im Mittelalter* (Munich and Berlin).
- Kaufmann-Heinimann, A., and M. Martin. 2017. *Die Apostelkanne und das Tafelsilber im Hortfund von 1628: Trierer Silberschätze des 5. Jahrhunderts* (Trier).
- Klein, H. A., ed. 2007. *Sacred Gifts and Worldly Treasures: Medieval Masterpieces from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.
- Leader-Newby, R. E. 2004. *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot).
- Loverdou-Tsigarida, K. 1998. "Βυζαντινή μικροτεχνία." In *Ἱερὰ Μεγίστη Μονὴ Βατοπαιδίου. Παράδοση, ἱστορία, τέχνη*. 2 vols., 458–99 (Mt. Athos).
- Matzulevitch, L. A. 1929 (repr. 1974). *Byzantinische Antike: Studien auf Grund der Silbergefäße der Ermitage* (Berlin).
- Meller, H., et. al. 2008. *Der heilige Schatz im Dom zu Halberstadt* (Regensburg).
- Mundell Mango, M., et. al. 1986. *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore).
- Mundell Mango, M. 1997. "Continuity of Fourth/Fifth Century Silver Plate in the Sixth/Seventh Centuries in the Eastern Empire." *Antiquité Tardive* 5: 83–92.
- Painter, K. S. 1977. *The Water Newton Early Christian Silver* (London).



- Painter, K. S. 1997. "Silver Hoards from Britain in their Late-Roman Context." *Antiquité Tardive* 5: 93–110.
- Painter, K. S. 1999. "The Water Newton Silver: Votive or Liturgical?" *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 152: 1–23.
- Richter-Siebels, I. 1990. "Die palästinensischen Weihrauchgefäße mit Reliefszenen aus dem Leben Christi." PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin.
- SanPietro, I. 2014. "Money, Power, Respect: Charity and the Creation of the Church." PhD diss., Columbia University.
- Sevrugian, P. 1992. *Liturgisches Gerät aus Byzanz: Die Berliner Patene und ihr Umkreis* (Berlin).
- Swift, E. H. 1937. "The Bronze Doors of the Gate of the Horologion at Hagia Sophia." *AB* 19: 137–47.
- Treasures of Mt. Athos.*
- Wamser, L. and G. Zahlhaas, eds. 1998. *Rom und Byzanz. Archäologische Kostbarkeiten aus Bayern* (Munich). Exhibition catalogue.
- Werner, J. 1984. *Der Grabfund von Malaja Pereščepina und Kuvrat, Kagan der Bulgaren* (Munich).
- Wixom, W., ed. 1999. *Mirror of the Medieval World* (New York). Exhibition catalogue.

## CHAPTER 32

---

# BRONZE AND COPPER ICONS

---

ELLEN C. SCHWARTZ

## INTRODUCTION

---

BYZANTINE metalwork is famous for its use of precious materials—gold and silver, occasionally decorated with enamels, gemstones, and pearls—which are used to create devotional objects and pieces of personal adornment (see chapters by Klein and Bosselmann-Ruickbie, this volume). Less familiar are the many objects made of base metals that include copper, bronze, and lead. There are several large bodies of work in which base metals feature heavily; seals and coins are the best studied of these. Seals were primarily fashioned of lead and thousands have been surveyed and discussed (Nesbitt 2008, 150–56). Coins were often made of copper as well as silver and gold, and the bibliography on them is equally extensive (Georganteli 2008, 157–75). Other secular objects, including household and personal items such as containers, locks and keys, scales and weights, and modest pieces of jewelry, have been considered and occasionally exhibited, particularly in contexts of the home or private life (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989). However, there are other items fashioned of these materials, and a number of these are religious in nature, including functional objects such as incense burners, pilgrimage flasks, processional cross bases, *polycandela*, reliquaries, and *encolpia* (Pitarakis 2006 and chapter, this volume). Some of these have been included in comprehensive exhibitions (*Treasures of Mount Athos, Byzantine Hours. Works and Days in Byzantium*). In contrast, there is one group of bronze and copper objects that has been scarcely studied: icons. These base metal images are almost never discussed, either in the literature on sculpture (Melvani 2013) or in that concerning icons (Cormack 2007). Even a book on Byzantine relief icons failed to consider them (Lange 1964).

As with many artworks made of metal, it is assumed that the majority of base metal icons from Byzantine times are no longer extant. Metals can be melted down and reused; evidence for this process is found in the silver sheets rolled up and crushed, headed for the smelter but fortunately interrupted, in the collection at Dumbarton Oaks (Boyd 2000). And yet, a surprising number of icons in bronze and copper have survived.

They are mentioned in wills such as the will of Eusthathios Boilas (Vryonis Jr. 1957) and in monastic *typika* and documents such as those of the Convent of the Mother of God Babaie Elpis and Vatopedi (Thomas and Hero 2000, 357, 552, 1186, 1561, 1671; Actes de Vatopédi 2001).

## ICONS IN *REPOUSSÉ*

---

Base metal icons were made using two techniques. In the first process, known as *repoussé*, thin sheets of copper alloy (copper mixed with a small percentage of tin) were heated and then hammered from behind, often into a receptacle filled with pitch. These would then have been finished on the front, either by chasing (pushing the metal with an instrument) or incising (scratching into the surface with a sharp tool). Occasionally, punches as well as molds that the piece can be hammered into are used to create repeated designs, seen often in borders. Icons made in repoussé tend to vary quite a bit in size. They include the largest among the base metal icons, 32 × 23 cm, to very small pieces, 4.4 × 4.8 cm. They exhibit different shapes, mostly rectangular. The majority of these surviving come from the mid-Byzantine period, between the tenth and the twelfth centuries (Schwartz 2014).

Copper repoussé icons are often unique pieces, hand-fashioned in this labor-intensive process. Many in this group echo some of the best icons in other materials and often exhibit a high degree of sophistication in inscriptions and in style, as seen in the famous icon of St. Hermalaos at Dumbarton Oaks (Boyd 1998), and the Hermitage plaque depicting the Enthroned Christ (Figure 32.1).

Other icons are cruder, with figures displaying inaccurate proportions and inscriptions with errors. It is primarily in these less elegant pieces that the use of punches and the process of hammering into a mold to create repetitive non-figural decorative elements is seen. An example is the dots perhaps alluding to pearls on the borders of a piece in a private collection in Munich (Figure 32.2).

Most of these repoussé icons are single plaques, depicting individual figures sometimes surrounded by simple borders. A number have integral frames, which are larger. A very few show scenes, usually some of the great feast scenes. These are among the few repoussé icons that form parts of series. The largest of these groupings is the set in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which once decorated the templon beam of a small, perhaps private, chapel (Brooks in review). Several other sets, including three comprising a *Deesis* and the piece illustrated in Figure 32.2, are in a private collection in Munich (Stiegmann 2001, cat. no. I.37, 132–34).

Copper repoussé icons were occasionally plated with silver or gold to look like precious metal icons. At least one was set with gems (Schwartz 2014, 365, n. 15). When highly polished, these pieces would exhibit the same reflective surface as seen in the more precious metal icons, a few of which have survived (Pentcheva 2006; Schwartz 2014). Plating would hide the humbler material, and copper icons framed by motifs



**FIGURE 32.1.** Plaque with the Enthroned Christ, Byzantine, twelfth–thirteenth century. Copper *repoussé*, 24.3 × 18 cm, St. Petersburg, The Hermitage, no. x 1038. © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo: Svetlana Suetova, Leonard Kheifets.

made to look like gems further the reference to those in gold and silver (Figure 32.1). This imitation of jewels in the border was necessary, as copper is too soft to reliably support the inlay of heavy gemstones, enamels, and pearls that figure so prominently in the few remaining golden icons (Pentcheva 2006, figs. 33, 35). These expensive items are clearly what both the individual copper icons and the series like the ones in New York and Munich appear created to imitate. In addition to these pieces with plating and imitation gems, one *repoussé* icon shows traces of enamel (*Exposition internationale d'art byzantin* 1931, cat. no. 509, 148, pl. XX), which may reflect several templon beams decorated with enamel, which have been proposed (Epstein 1981; *ArtByzEmp*, 196).

In terms of iconography, these copper icons relate closely to the precious images they imitate in their frequent depiction of single figures. Icons in other media seem to include more groups of figures and scenes, as seen in the Middle Byzantine ivories (see Connor



FIGURE 32.2. Part of a templon beam with donor Alexander Tormachos and the Archangel Uriel (from a Deesis) under an arcade. Asia Minor (?), eleventh–twelfth century. Copper *repoussé*, 17.8 × 20.4 cm; Munich, Collection of Dr. Christian Schmidt, inv. no. 2913. Photodesign Friedrich, Munich, courtesy of Dr. Christian Schmidt.

chapter, this volume). Of course, the limited preservation of metal pieces make any such assertion very provisional. Stylistically, these icons relate closely to icons in paint, ivory, and steatite in terms of figural proportions, drapery patterns, and the paleography of inscriptions (see chapters by Corrie and Connor, this volume).

Whatever their subject, style, and quality, copper repoussé icons functioned in a variety of ways. Those in series most likely decorated lintels of small chapels, either in monastic contexts or attached to a noble home. Other icons would have been backed with wood and served as single icons do, as the focus of devotion and petition (see Corrie chapter, this volume). Some of the smaller pieces may have decorated liturgical furniture; a standing figure has been suggested as embellishment of a small ciborium over an altar (Stiegemann 2001, cat. no. I.34: 129–30). Particularly diminutive pieces may have served to decorate icon frames, book covers, or other items used in a liturgical setting, much as precious plaques and enameled roundels did.

## CAST BRONZE ICONS

A second group of metal icons served in both similar and different roles. These pieces are made by another technique, that of casting. Casting involves the use of molten bronze, again an alloy of copper and tin—there is no set determination as to what is and isn't referred to as "bronze." In this process, an exact model of what is wanted is created in wax. This model is invested (embedded) in a mold, which is then heated to melt out the wax (hence the term "lost wax" or *cire-perdue* casting). Hot, molten metal is poured into the mold. When the piece is cooled and freed from the mold, final details can be added by chasing or incising, as with the repoussé items.

Cast icons tend to be far sturdier and heavier than the repoussé examples, and they do not require any backing for support. Cast pieces are usually smaller than many of those done in repoussé. Many more cast pieces have survived than those in the more fragile medium; a number have come to light and have been exhibited in the second half of the twentieth century, since Talbot Rice opined, "Cast metal was much less usual than repoussé work" (Talbot Rice 1958, 60). Almost half of those surveyed are round in format, and vary from a rare 9.7 cm in diameter to 2.35 cm. Most of this group falls in the 3–5.5 cm diameter range. Slightly over half of the cast pieces are rectangular or square; these are slightly larger, measuring between 6–10 cm on the longest side. A very few are rectangular with a gently arched top. The rectangular icons include the largest of the cast pieces, with long sides of 15–19.7 cm. The weight of these large pieces is considerable, rather heavy to be carried about. These larger ones may have been displayed in a worship context like the repoussé icons, affixed to an *iconostasis* or stand. The smaller pieces, especially those in a circular format, may have served as portable tokens, like the pilgrimage souvenirs made in various materials (Vikan 2010). Anything smaller than about 4 cm in diameter could have served in this way, either to attract blessing or good fortune, or to ward off evil (see chapters by Pitarakis and Tuerk-Stonberg, this volume). Approximately half the round icons studied fall into this size category. Many have a loop at the top, punched out of a flange integral to the casting; this indicates that they were hung, either on a larger icon, an iconostasis, or icon stand, or, as some authors assert, around the neck as an amulet (Gonosová and Kondoleon 1994, 120, 128). Surviving pieces come from Early and Middle Byzantine periods, and continue past the fifteenth century. Late descendants are the brass icons that flourished in Russia from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries (Ahlborn and Espinola 1991, 47–89).

Some of these images appear to have served in yet other roles. Cast plaques with outlines of figures and designs formed the covering of wooden doors in churches (Bouras 1975). Several cast pieces that are very thick (some as high as .8 cm) have been posited as the dies from which repoussé plaques—whether of bronze or a precious metal—were struck, as previously mentioned; some authors assert that these were positives, from which wax models for casting may have been made (Vasilev 1982). This use of molds and dies would have helped spread standard iconography and stylistic

characteristics across the Byzantine Empire. The large number of bronze icon finds in remote cities and areas such as Cherson are testimony to this geographic diffusion during the tenth–thirteenth centuries (National Preserve of Tauric Chersonesos 2011).

Cast icons, like the pieces in copper repoussé, primarily display a single figure. The preponderance of these depictions are saints, mostly military saints, with St. George favored. Many display the use of almost identical models to those of the copper repoussé icons, such as a standing military saint with a spear in the right hand and a shield balanced on the ground to the figure's left. This ubiquitous figure is used to illustrate several saints—George, Theodore, Procopios, and Demetrios, among others. Such military saints are often depicted in almost identical ways in a variety of media (Walter 2003). And a number of the larger cast pieces show groupings of saints, often including military figures. Another commonly displayed subject is the Virgin, frequently with the Christ Child but occasionally alone. The solo image of Christ is popular, and single angels—especially Michael—are also seen. Again, as in the case of the repoussé icons, scenes are less frequently displayed than are single figures. Among these narrative subjects, the Crucifixion is the most frequently depicted.

Cast icons, many worn from handling, generally have more fragmentary inscriptions. Some are completely devoid of text. Several of the standard military saints referenced earlier are without any identifier; this ambiguity may have been deliberate, so such icons could be sold and used as images of several different military saints, depending on the purchaser and the circumstances. A few of the cast pieces, however, have long dedicatory or petitionary inscriptions, mostly around the edges. These examples are some of the most elaborately framed. A limited number have beautiful borders with decorative bosses; one of the Virgin in the Walters Art Gallery (54.83), for example, has shell patterns included in the frame. Primarily, however, the frames of the cast pieces vary from a simple raised rim or single band of a *guilloche* pattern to a beaded band (perhaps to imitate pearls, as seen on the repoussé icons).

As in the case of the earlier group, the cast icons, too, exhibit both elegant styling as well as crude, almost folk-like renderings. At their finest, cast icons exhibit the refinement seen in icons in all other media. Several are so close in style to ivories that at least one appears to have been cast from a mold taken from a contemporary ivory, as has been suggested in the case of famous triptych in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1982, #26, 183). A group of six saints in a rectangular format in the Mayer van der Berghe Museum in Antwerp shows the standard figure style of the Middle Byzantine period, with standing figures including a military saint in *contraposto* stances, and a variety of dress and attributes on display (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1982, no. 23, 180).

A large number look much cruder, and are perhaps examples of a group made from a single mold. Several pieces that are identical, such as the pair in the Benaki and the Menil collection (Figure 32.3) (Weyl Carr 2011, fig. 3), show that molds were reused. Had more metal icons been preserved, more of these copies would undoubtedly be seen.



**FIGURE 32.3.** Inscribed icon with a relief representation of St. George, Byzantine, eleventh century. Cast bronze, 7 × 3 cm; Athens, Benaki Museum, Gift of Jacob Hirsch, ΓΕ 11430. © Benaki Museum.



This use of matrices along with punches allowing reproduction would have facilitated production, making both cast pieces and those in repoussé more affordable. This may have been in part why bronze, often referred to as *σαρούτιη* in documents, is generally regarded as less expensive and valuable in the Byzantine mind, included toward the bottom of inventories and wills. Byzantine bronze icons, for example, are often listed last, even after icons painted on wood panels. Bronze objects of other types, such as tools and kitchen or table utensils, are also listed toward the end of such groupings, indicating the lower monetary value and status of this more humble material. Nonetheless, these copper icons were not cheap. Skill, training, and a fully equipped workshop were required for their creation. The social milieu to which they most likely belonged included the middle-to-upper-class patron or household, where the repoussé and cast images would have most likely served as icons for private prayer, as portable images, and as gifts to churches and monasteries. Some were clearly the product of highly placed patrons: the London Hodēgētria, for example, was commissioned by an ecclesiastic of high rank. This is evidenced by the inscription on the plaque that reads, “Mother of God help thy servant Philip the Bishop” (*Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 331, 495–96). The high quality of a number of these images and their accurate inscriptions may further indicate cultured patrons of some means, while smaller, cruder pieces may have been aimed at the less educated consumer.

## FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

---

Iconographically and stylistically, all these bronze icons relate to similar images in other media: stone, ivory, steatite, and paint, as well as the precious images they clearly imitate. Gilded, they could double for these icons, or echo the golden glow of painted images with gold-leaf backgrounds. The small size of a number of these icons may indicate their function in a private context, related to by a single worshipper, either in a private chapel or a domestic setting. Their diminutive dimensions meant that they could serve as re-tvetment, part of a composite piece such as a smaller icon beam, or as single panels or portable images for private devotion. Their humble medium belies their often high artistic quality. More remains to be done on these base metal icons and related pieces. While several articles have recently discussed repoussé works, one forming a compendium and another examining the significant group in the Metropolitan (Schwartz 2014; Brooks in review), more items are already coming to light. A number of the cast pieces can be found depicted and discussed in various exhibition catalogues (National Preserve of Tauric Chersonesos 2011), but these are rarely given in-depth and extended study. This group thus awaits further scholarly attention. Consideration of these icons in context would then further illuminate the private sphere of devotion and donation, while widening our knowledge of artistic practices in Byzantine times. Similarly, while occasionally seen in catalogues (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989) and a few articles (Drandaki 2013), the group of humbler liturgical items and household

utensils of bronze—of which many remain—is a genre also in need of study, to elucidate further the religious and personal world of the Byzantine era.

## REFERENCES

- Actes de Vatopédi I, Des origines à 1329*. 2001, edited by J. Bompaire et. al. Archives de l'Athos 21, no. 15, 157.178–158, 178 (Paris).
- Ahlborn, R. E., and V. Beaver-Bricken Espinola. 1991. *Russian Copper Icons and Crosses from the Kunz Collection: Castings of Faith* (Washington, DC).
- ArtByzEmp*.
- Bouras, Ch. 1975. "The Byzantine Bronze Doors of the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos." *JÖB* 24: 236–37.
- Boyd, S. A. 2000. "A 'Metropolitan' Treasure from a Church in the Provinces: An Introduction to the Study of the Sion Treasure." In *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth Century Byzantium*, edited by S. A. Boyd, M. Mundell Mango, and G. Vikan (Washington, DC).
- Boyd, S. A. 1998. "Ex-Voto Therapy: A Note on a Copper Plaque with St. Hermolaos." In *Aetos, Studies in Honor of Cyril Mango*, edited by I. Ševčenko and I. Hutter, 15–27 (Stuttgart).
- Brooks, S. "Sculpting the Triumphant Cross: The Byzantine Templon Screen and an Unknown Cycle of Precious-Metal Icons," article under review.
- Cormack, R. 2007. *Icons* (Cambridge, MA).
- Drankdaki, A. 2013. "From Centre to Periphery and Beyond: The Diffusion of Models in Late Antique Metalware." In *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through Its Art*, edited by A. Eastmond and L. James, 163–84 (Surrey).
- Durand, J., et. al, eds. 1992. *Byzance: L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris). Exhibition catalogue.
- Epstein, A. W. 1981. "The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: Templon or Iconostasis?" *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 134: 1–28, at 5.
- Exposition internationale d'art byzantin*. 1931. (Paris). Exhibition catalogue.
- Georganteli, E. 2008. "Numismatics." In *OHBS* 157-75.
- Glory of Byzantium*.
- Gonosová, A., and C. Kondoleon. 1994. *Art of Rome and Late Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* (Richmond, VA).
- <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/6442/virgin-mary>.
- Lafontaine-Dosogne, J. 1982. *Splendeur de Byzance* (Brussels). Exhibition catalogue.
- Lange, R. 1964. *Die byzantinische Reliefkone* (Recklinghausen).
- Maguire, E., H. Maguire, and M. Duncan-Flowers. 1989. *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana, IL). Exhibition catalogue.
- Melvani, N. 2013. *Late Byzantine Sculpture* (Turnhout).
- National Preserve of Tauric Chersonesos, The State Hermitage, and The State Historical Museum. 2011. *The Legacy of Byzantine Cherson* (Sevastopol and Austin). Exhibition catalogue.
- Nesbitt, J. 2008. "Sigillography." In *OHBS* 150-56.
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2006. "The Performative Icon," *AB* 88, 4: 631–55.
- Pitarakis, B. 2015. "Bronze Jewelry." In *Sacred Art, Secular Context*, edited by A. Kirin, 98–99 (Athens, GA). Exhibition catalogue.
- Pitarakis, B. 2006. *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze* (Paris).

- Schwartz, E. C. 2014. "Copper *Repoussé* Icons of Middle and Later Byzantine Times." *DChAE*, Series 4, 35: 361–74.
- Stiegemann, C., ed. 2001. *Byzanz: Das Licht aus dem Osten* (Mainz). Exhibition catalogue.
- Talbot Rice, D. 1958. *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art* (Edinburgh). Exhibition catalogue.
- Thomas, J. P. and A. C. Hero. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders Typika and Testaments*. Dumbarton Oaks Series 35 (Washington, DC).
- Vasilev, V. P. 1982. "Matrizenmodelle in der byzantinischen Toreutik." In *Metallkunst von der Spätantike bis zum ausgehenden Mittelalter*, edited by A. Effenberger, 90–96 (Berlin).
- Vikan, G. 2010. *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*. Rev. ed. (Washington, DC).
- Vita Basilii*, translated in *ArtByzEmp*.
- Vryonis, Jr., S. 1957. "The Will of a Provincial Magnate, Eustathius Boilas (1059)." *DOP* 11: 263–77 at 268.
- Walter, Christopher. 2003. *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot).
- Weyl Carr, A., ed. 2011. *Imprinting the Divine: Byzantine and Russian Icons from The Menil Collection* (Houston).

## CHAPTER 33

---

# AMULETS, CROSSES, AND RELIQUARIES

---

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

THE Byzantines used the word *phylakterion*—from the Greek φυλάσσω, meaning to keep secure or protect—for a range of objects, from amulets and charms to crosses, relics, and pilgrimage souvenirs. Despite the church fathers' disapproval, amulets were widely used during Late Antiquity, with the boundary between religion and magic not always clear-cut among the masses (see also Tuerk-Stonberg chapter, this volume). From the perspective of the church, the wonders performed by saints were not perceived as magic, but as a reflection of God's intervention. The distinction between amulets acceptable to the church and those restricted to the realm of the magicians—also called περιάμματα, “tied-on objects,” that is, worn around the neck, arm, head, leg, or attached to clothing—lay in their means and goals.

While magic through amulets was thought to imply interaction with demons and the ability to inflict harm, the aim of religious amulets was to protect. These various personal items relate closely to other objects of Christian worship, the evolution of beliefs, and devotional practices reflected in them. During the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, protection and devotion were closely interwoven. With an intensification of belief in the intercessory power of saints, objects of devotion became privileged protective devices invested with strong *apotropaic* power. Examination of the main categories of religious objects in terms of their material composition, the techniques used in their production, and their typologies sheds light not only on mechanisms of their mass production but also on the diffusion of artistic models through Byzantine society.

## THE BATTLE AGAINST EVIL: PECTORAL CROSSES AND TRUE CROSS RELICS

---

Combating evil forces often involved relics along with religious amulets, a holdover from Early Christian times. The *Life* of Macrina (born in 327), a nun and sister of Gregory of Nyssa, offers one of the earliest testimonies of wearing a pectoral cross along with true cross relics. In this instance, the cross was plain, and the relics were encased in the hollow bezel of a ring with a cross motif on its surface. As Gregory prepared the body of his sister for burial, he discovered these pieces of modest, iron jewelry tied together by a slender thread suspended around her neck (*PG* 46: 989–90; Lowther Clarke 1916). In a sermon from 387, John Chrysostom records that many people encased slivers of the True Cross in gold to be worn around the neck as an ornament (*PG* 48:826). Veneration of True Cross relics through private practices of devotion increased beginning in the fifth century, and testimonies allow the tracing of its geographical distribution.

The fifth- or early sixth-century *Life* of Peter the Iberian, the Georgian royal prince and later bishop of Maiuma, Gaza who in his youth was brought as a hostage to the court of Theodosius II, reports that he had obtained a piece of the True Cross from clerics who had traveled from Jerusalem. Peter covered it with a bit of wax, wrapped it in fine cloth, and placed it in a gold container. Each Sunday, he retrieved it to kiss it and bless himself, after which he returned it to the vessel. Later, toward the year 431, while traveling to the Holy Land to become a monk, Peter took along a fragment of the True Cross enclosed in his gospel book, probably the cover. During the trip, the relic was said to have exuded some kind of oil in abundance. Peter and his traveling companion would rub their bodies with the miraculous balm and regain their strength (Raabe 1895, 29–30 and 41–42; Frolow 1961, 170–71; no. 16; Klein 2004, 35).

From the late sixth century, especially following the translation of the True Cross to Constantinople by Heraclius (r. 610–641), the center of the cult of these relics moved from Jerusalem to the imperial capital (Klein 2004, 41–43; Zuckerman 2013). Already graced with pieces of the Marian robe and girdle, Constantinople acquired the character of a God-guarded city. The cross functioned as a status symbol and a powerful protective device, as evidenced by jewelry hoards from the seventh century, which often include small pectoral crosses suspended on lavish necklaces with multiple pendants and ornate clasps (see Bosselmann-Ruickbie chapter, this volume). Such jewelry sets could have been part of the imperial largesse distributed to high officers. Constantinople emerged as a major center for the production of jewelry crosses concurrently with northern Syria and Egypt. A standard pattern positions the cross between a pair of heart-shaped leaves or cylindrical amulets (Pitarakis 2006b, 165); other items suspended include the apotropaic motif of a standing angel carrying a cross, along with rows of miniature cantharus and amphora shapes, which might reference preserving the blessed oil produced by the true wood in Jerusalem, the baptismal *myron*, or perhaps vases of manna.

Gold crosses used as jewelry dating to the sixth–seventh centuries offer the prototypes for the subsequent production of pectoral crosses in all materials for the duration of the Byzantine Empire. Their distinctive features lie in the technique of their production and their decorative repertoire. The richest category was fashioned by hand from gold foil. The two thin sides were soldered together, while a sulfur-based jewelry filling prevented them from being crushed. A circular or cruciform setting for a cabochon or glass paste was frequently placed at the intersection of the arms on the front, while the  $\Phi\Omega\Sigma$   $Z\Omega H$  (Light Life) acrostic was a frequent motif on the reverse. Fragments of the True Cross might have been enclosed within the central setting shaped like (another) cross.

Three major types of this category of gold foil crosses can be identified: crosses with tubular or faceted arms with a plain surface sometimes highlighted by a niello inscription and a garnet at the intersection of the arms; box-like crosses with flared, ornamented arms and concave or fork-shaped terminals (Brown 1984); and crosses with flared arms ending in medallions with side spurs and an embossed decoration obtained from impression on a bronze matrix (Brokalakis 2012, 226). Within the last type, two variants are distinguishable: One features a Crucifixion, with Christ in a *colobium* or *himation*, framed by anonymous busts in medallions and other elements of the scene. The second consists of crosses formed by a cruciform cavity or embossed design framed by four medallions (Figure 33.1).

## Devotion, Magic, and Healing

Development of the cult of the cross in private devotional patterns was linked to fragments of the True Cross. The Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem provided the framework for veneration of the True Cross throughout the Byzantine Empire; it also fostered the development of Solomon amulets invested with a strong healing power.

The testimony of the pilgrim Egeria in the early 380s reveals that on Good Friday at the Holy Sepulcher, fragments of the True Cross were displayed on a table in front of the bishop's chair in Golgotha behind the Cross, together with the *titulus* from it, the horn used for anointing the biblical kings, and the seal ring of Solomon (Maraval 1982, 287, chap. 37.1 and 3; English trans., Wilkinson 1981, 137). The *titulus* proved the authenticity of the cross, while the horn and ring stressed the Davidic ancestry of Christ, his kingship, and eternal reign in heavenly Jerusalem.

The semantic chain of the word *seal* involving the baptismal unction, the sign of the cross, and the seal of Solomon is an important element in understanding the veneration ritual at the Holy Sepulcher. The seal of Solomon was probably presented as evidence to challenge the views of opponents of Christianity who accused Jesus of being a magician. The reference to the anointment of the biblical kings connects Christ's royal ancestry, His identity as the Messiah and His power of exorcism, while the seal of Solomon highlights the eternal kingship of Christ and the role of the cross as the instrument uniting the two Covenants, accomplishing the removal of sin and fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah of a new Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–37).



**FIGURE 33.1.** Gold cross, sixth–seventh century. Geneva, Musées d’art et d’histoire, acc. no. AD 7489. Quatrefoil-shaped cavity framed by four busts: Christ, the Mother of God, and two angels. Copyright Musées d’art et d’histoire de Genève.

In Late Antiquity, demons were believed ubiquitous, and the fight against them was a constant concern (Mango 1992). To protect those leaving home to go to the marketplace, John Chrysostom recommended reciting a passage from the baptismal liturgy that begins with “I renounce thee, Satan” while making the sign of the cross on one’s forehead (PG 49: 240; Hjort 1993, 109).

Military combat was a conventional metaphor for the fight against the devil, and the cross was viewed as the most efficient weapon in this battle. The hallmark of early amuletic imagery is the triumphant Holy Rider piercing a female demon with a lance. In a group of circular copper alloy medallions dated to the sixth–seventh century, the rider is surrounded by inscriptions invoking the seal of Solomon, St. Sisinnios, and the angel Araph, commonly preceded by a cross (Figure 33.2; see also Figure 6.3). These three are part of legends involving a female demon attacking nurslings and pregnant women (Pitarakis 2014, 385–95; Spier 2014, 51).

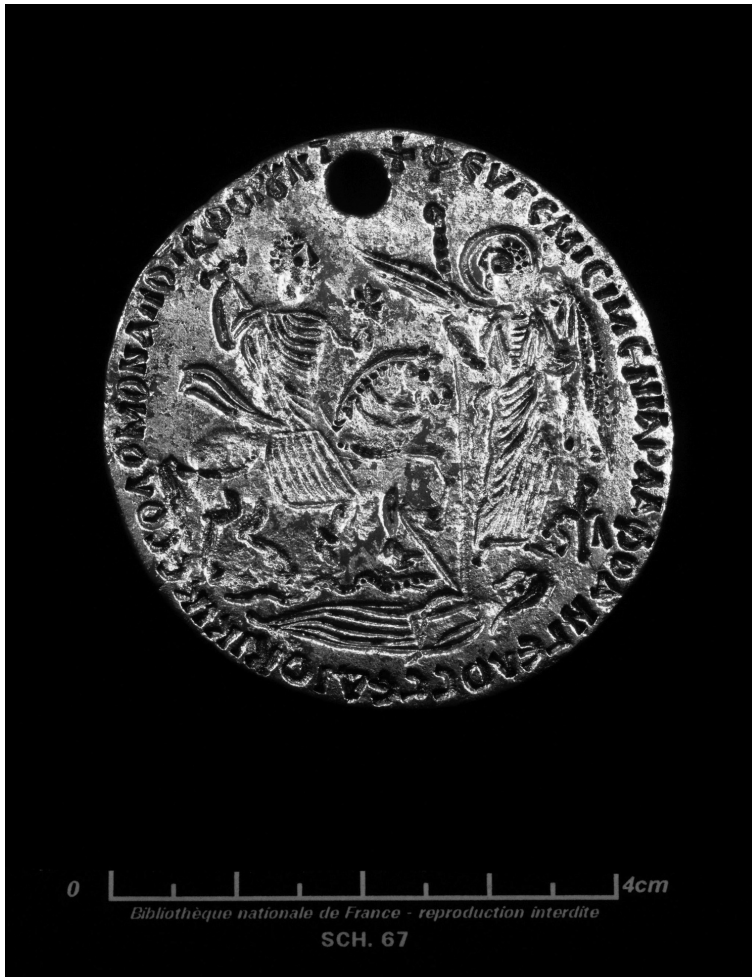


FIGURE 33.2. Copper alloy amulet, sixth–seventh century. Solomon as triumphant horseman spearing a female demon with the assistance of the angel Araph. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, acc. no. Schlumberger 67.



The identification of the Holy Rider as Solomon is specific to this category of so-called womb amulets. On some copper-alloy medallions, the image of the Holy Rider on one side is usually coupled with representations of Visions of Christ (Christ in Majesty, Christ Emmanuel hovering above a shining cross on Golgotha) and the Virgin on a lyre-back throne holding a medallion of Christ on the other. This image of the Virgin and Child is one of the most popular Christian depictions of the sixth century, appearing on clay tokens and a wide range of amulets, including medallions, bracelets, and rings from pilgrimage sanctuaries such as that of Symeon Stylite the Elder in Qal'at Sim'an (Sodini, Blanc, and Pieri 2010, 808). A bronze cross at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto suggests that the image served as an allegorical representation of the church (Cotsonis 1994, 96–97, no. 10).

In light of the iconographic program on the reverse side of these amulets, one can argue that their womb symbolism was linked to the seedless pregnancy of the Mother of God. This idea may be further underscored by the testimony of the well-known sixth-century miniature from a Syriac Bible (Paris BN, Ms. Syr. 341, fol. 118r) opening the book of Proverbs (Pacha Miran 2020; Jolivet-Lévy 2021, 389–419). It shows the standing figures of Solomon and *Ecclesia*, each holding a book, on either side of the Virgin who carries the Christ Child in a blue mandorla. As Herbert Kessler observes, the function of this iconography is to mediate between God's message in the Old Testament and his Incarnation reported in the New (Kessler 2007, 150). The protection of childbirth conveyed by the Solomon amulets may thus have been invested with multiple layers of meaning and also be understood as a metaphorical reference to the birth of new Christians through the sacrament of Baptism. Solomon—builder of the house of God and royal ancestor of Christ—heralds the eternal reign of peace in eternal Jerusalem (Pitarakis 2017, 527–36).

## INTERCESSION AND SALVATION IN PERSONAL DEVOTION: FROM POST-ICONOCLASM TO LATE BYZANTINE TIMES

---

A healthy body and soul, successful childbearing, and the promise of salvation remained universal concerns in the period after Iconoclasm, thus continuing to provide the framework for the production of objects of private devotion and amulets. The types and decorative patterns adopted reflect the profound transformations introduced by the Iconoclastic Controversy (see Brubaker chapter, this volume) and the gradual downsizing of public displays of religiosity, diminution in the scale of church architecture, and development of monasticism and private religious foundations.

As new decorative programs and systems of artificial lighting emerged as a counterpart to the evolution of the liturgical drama, the shape, construction, and style of private devotional objects developed to enhance the impressions of church services.

Models distributed from Constantinopolitan workshops were copied by a network of workshops throughout Anatolia, the Balkans, and Russia.

## Pectoral Reliquary Crosses

Theological discussions during the periods of Iconoclasm (726–787 and 815–843) subsequently led to a strengthening of belief in the intercessory power of the saints through their images and relics. According to the writings of Nikephoros I, patriarch of Constantinople (806–815), the carrying of gold and silver pectoral reliquaries of the True Cross with representations from the Christological cycle was a widespread practice. In his *Third Antirrheticus*, written during the second period of Iconoclasm, Nikephoros states that Christians wear such reliquaries suspended from the neck to safeguard their lives and for the salvation of soul and body. They came to be called phylacteries because of their supposed ability to prevent attacks by demons and cure misfortunes (PG 100: 433; Kartsonis 1986, 119; Kartsonis 1994, 83–84).

Nikephoros does not specify or describe a particular type of phylactery, but he probably had in mind the widely produced pectoral reliquary crosses. This was the most popular type of *enkolpion* (ἐγκόλπιον, meaning, on the chest) from the ninth to the late eleventh century, made of two hollow sides hinged together to create a box-like space for relics, equipped with a suspension loop so the cross could rest on the chest. The hollow sides of these reliquaries were made by casting in bivalve molds of stone or clay. The most elaborate prototypes, including the tiny ninth-century Pliska cross made of cast gold with niello decoration, consisted of a complex arrangement of two crosses, one fit into the other. The Pliska exterior cross measured  $4.2 \times 3.2$  cm, the one inside  $4 \times 3$  cm. A slit on the crucifix image on the front of the inner cross permitted visual contact with the relics and allowed their sweet smell to escape. The dominant practice was to mix shards of wood from the True Cross in a mastic material together with bits of stone (probably from Golgotha or other sacred places), grains of sand, incense, and bone fragments (Pitarakis 2006a, 117–18; Elsner 2015, 24; Durand 2015, 284).

In response to the demand for these crosses across the economic spectrum, the crafts industry of the capital developed mechanisms for imitating a range of metals, from gold with niello decoration and *cloisonné* enamels to nielloed silver and copper alloy (Pitarakis 2006a). The Latin cross with flared arms and straight terminals was the most common type of pectoral reliquary cross from the ninth to the twelfth century. Beginning in the late tenth–early eleventh century, there was a diversification of types, inspired by the typology of processional crosses. The most common types attested to in production from Constantinople and Anatolia are a Latin cross with flared arms and pear-shaped serifs; a cross with short, flared arms and projecting discs; a Latin cross with flared arms and projecting discs flanked by a pair of pear-shaped serifs; and a Latin cross with slender arms enclosing medallions flanked by a pair of small spherical knobs.

The chronology of pectoral reliquary crosses can be further refined by their iconographic patterns. The theological background of the Iconoclastic Controversy led

to a rearrangement of the Christological cycle to address the Christian dogma of the Incarnation and Salvation. For production dated to the ninth century, scenes from the Infancy cycle and Baptism occupy the front, while the reverse is devoted to the Crucifixion, Ascension, and a newly developed scene, the *Anastasis* or Harrowing of Hell. This latter composition includes busts of David and Solomon, Christ's human ancestors; He is shown trampling Hades while delivering Adam and Eve, with the flashing light of his divinity sometimes depicted behind him (Kartsonis 1986, 191–203).

The most popular iconographic layout from the ninth to the eleventh century combines the Crucifixion on one side with the Virgin framed by the busts of the four Evangelists or church fathers on the other. Christ on the cross dressed in a colobium is the standard feature on the first four cross types; the half-length figures of the Mother of God and St. John the Evangelist are on the opposing extremities of the cross. The Gospel quotations "Behold, your son" and "Behold, your mother" (John 19:26–27) run beneath the outstretched arms of Christ. Adam's skull under the *suppedaneum* enhances the redemptive message. Beginning in the tenth century, the letters Φ(Ω)C (Light) sometimes appeared between the symbols of the sun and moon as a reference to the light of the eternal life of redemption (John 1:4 and 8:12), while the victorious acclamation Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς Νηκᾶ (Jesus Christ conquers) is often introduced on the horizontal arm in the place of the gospel quote. In the eleventh century, the image of the naked Christ in loincloth began to appear on the last two cross types. Among the framing busts, one often finds the archangel Michael at the top and military saints dressed in their armor in the lateral medallions.

During the ninth and early tenth centuries, the Virgin holding the Christ before her chest usually graces the back of pectoral reliquary crosses. A columnar inscription proclaims her *Hagia Theotokos* (Holy God-Bearer). This image stresses the humanity of the Incarnate Logos, while the framing busts of the Gospel writers convey the intercessory role of the Virgin in the transmission of the Word of God. The *Blachernitissa*, with both hands uplifted in prayer, is the most common Marian image throughout the late tenth and eleventh centuries. On the examples with relief decoration, the letters Μ(ήτηρ)Ρ Θ(εο)Υ (Mother of God) are engraved on either side of her waist, while on the flat crosses with engraved decoration, a richer repertory of epithets occupy the top of the vertical arm, including *Panagia* (All-Holy), and *Meter Christou* (Mother of Christ). A pair of palm trees, stars, or other ornamental motifs alluding to a heavenly setting flank the Virgin. The *Hodēgētria*, a military saint in his armor, or St. Nicholas in bishop's attire are the most common images on the reverse of crosses bearing the image of Christ in loincloth.

The Marian types displayed on pectoral reliquary crosses closely follow the evolution of the devotional patterns of Byzantine society. For example, coin iconography appears to have served as a major prototype for goldsmiths. Toward the end of his reign, Leo VI (r. 886–912) introduced the Virgin *orans* as a bust on his gold coinage. Various types proliferated beginning in the 1030s, influenced by the cult icons placed in the Marian shrines of Constantinople (Grierson 1999, 35–36).

Copper alloy reliquary crosses with flat surfaces enhanced by engraving include a distinctive category pairing representations of the Mother of God and saints in orans position on the two sides (Pitarakis 2006b, 153–60). In some cases, one finds a schematic rendering of the cross on Golgotha, incense burners or busts of other saints added, often identified by inscriptions and sometimes by attributes. These images appear to have been invested with apotropaic value regardless of their identity, and indeed, anonymous saints are also frequently included.

The iconography of the Virgin orans on this category of crosses introduced a new variant in the form of the standing figure of the Christ Child hovering, as if by a miracle, on her torso (Figure 33.3).

The creation of this symbolism may be linked to the weekly Friday performance of the so-called usual miracle at the Blachernai (Pentcheva 2006, 145–47). In light of contemporary developments in the Eucharistic rite, it could also be a metaphor based on the carved out, stamped portion of the Eucharistic bread representing the sacrificial lamb (*amnos*) and signifying the body of Christ. In the liturgical commentary of Theodore and Nicholas of Andida, dated to the late eleventh century, this ritual represents the separation of the body of Christ from the womb of the Virgin, while the deacon who performs the separation is compared to the archangel Gabriel, who reveals to Mary her virginal motherhood (Schulz 1986, 91–92, 98–9).

The most frequently depicted saints in the above group are George followed by John the Evangelist, Peter, archangel Michael, Stephen, Nicholas, Niketas, and Theodore. Others included are the four archangels along with various saints. Of note, the military saints are dressed not in their usual military attire, but instead arrayed in tunics and mantles as martyrs.

A final distinctive group of these amulets consists of aniconic crosses decorated with circular cavities (to hold glass paste), concentric circles on the surface of the cross arms, linear ornamental motifs, and inscriptions. The most common inscription is Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς Νηκᾶ on one side, while the other side features a conventional selection of formulae or invocations arranged in a cruciform pattern, sometimes in a monogrammatic form. These include Φῶς Ζωή, Θεοτόκε Βοήθη (Theotokos help!), Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος, Κύριος (Holy, Holy, the Lord)—the spelling of ἅγιος and Βοήθει with an *eta* is common on bronze crosses—which is the beginning of the Sanctus chanted in the Eucharistic prayer (anaphora) of the Byzantine liturgy.

## Later Enkolpia

In response to a growing and diversified demand, later Constantinopolitan workshops also created other types of enkolpia inspired by the typology of larger *staurotheke*. One finds small-scale versions of rectangular True Cross reliquary boxes with a sliding lid and a cruciform cavity at the center (Réunion des musées nationaux 1992, 321–22, no. 236; *Glory of Byzantium*, 162–63, no. 110). There are also oval- or circular-shaped capsules that lock with a screw (Réunion des musées nationaux 1992, 317–18, no. 231).

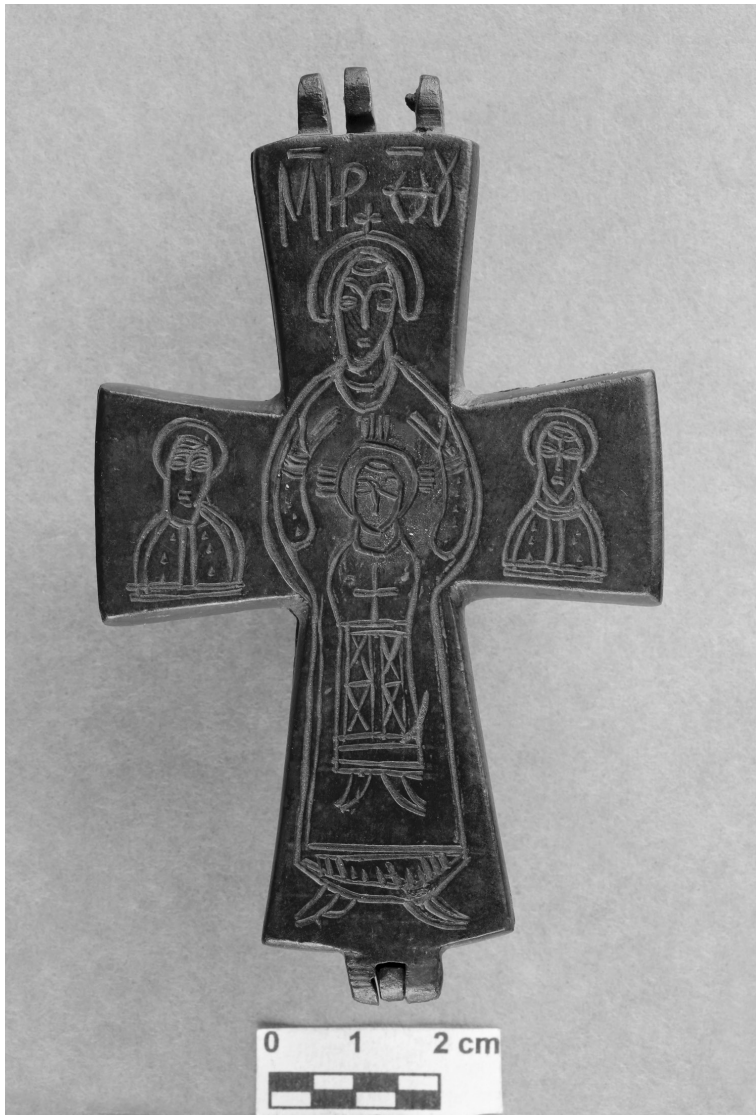


FIGURE 33.3. Copper alloy pectoral reliquary cross, eleventh century. Virgin and Child orans. Inscription: M(HTH)P Θ(EO)Y (Mother of God). Istanbul Archaeological Museums, acc. no. 71.248 (M).

The latter were intended to hold individual relics of saints. A tiny gold example of oblong shape in Paris, dated to the tenth or eleventh century, for instance, carries a niello inscription identifying the relic as one of St. Stephen the Younger (Réunion des musées nationaux 1992, 318, no. 232).

Beginning in the late eleventh century, and gaining popularity in the twelfth, there is a shift from the production of pectoral crosses to hold True Cross fragments and

other anonymous relics from holy places to the manufacture of rectangular pectoral reliquaries—evoking box-like, small icons—to hold diverse relics from the life and Passion of Christ and other relics of saints identified in lengthy epigrams decorating the lids. A twelfth-century gold rectangular enkolpion in Siena equipped with a sliding lid has an enameled Crucifixion scene on the front, and on the reverse, a gemmed cross set against a filigree background. Three large drops of blood spurt from Christ's side, falling into a cantharus-style vase sitting at the foot of the Virgin, who raises her hands toward her son. This detail is a precursor of the new Crucifixion type attested to in monumental painting, showing the personification of Ecclesia, who holds a chalice collecting the blood flowing from Christ's wound, while on the other side of Christ an angel drives away a personification of Synagogue. The epigram framing the cross describes the relics held inside as the "Flowers of Christ's Passion," while the recipient of the object states his wish to "win the flowers of Paradise" (Hetherington 1983, 9–10; Bellosi 1996, 107–10, no. 4).

The inspiration for objects such as this may have come from the revival of the cult of the Passion in the Pharos chapel at the Great Palace under the Komnenians (1081–1185). The transfer of the stone of the deposition from Ephesus to Constantinople by Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1169–1170) crowned Constantinople's transformation into the New Jerusalem. The emperor carried the stone slab in a procession from the Boukoleon harbor to the Pharos church in an act invested with both religious and political symbolism (Magdalino 1993, 178; Drpić 2019, 60–82). The collection of Passion relics became symbols legitimating Byzantium's involvement in the Crusades. The relics were regularly displayed for veneration by Western visitors, and became the focus of a local cult (Magdalino 2004, 29). Enshrined in shallow panel-like reliquaries, they took on the role of living icons helping the faithful to mentally relive the life of Jesus Christ.

The production of shallow, box-like enkolpia without relics can be attested to from the Komnenian through the Palaiologan period (late eleventh-through the mid-fifteenth centuries). The most salient characteristic of this production is a taste for polychromy and an expert combination of materials and techniques to create a harmonious contrast between one side with relief decoration and the flat second side. One may rightly assume that the relief decoration on the front was adapted to devotional rituals involving touching and kissing, while the flatness of the reverse side allowed the object to rest on the body of the wearer. There was a growing interest in representing the human emotions of the holy protagonists in their interactions with the Divine through references to liturgical hymns and sermons as well as the Eucharistic ritual itself.

On a group of square silver-gilt enkolpia dated to the thirteenth–fourteenth century, the iconography of the Crucifixion introduces the lamenting angels descending toward the dead body of Christ, their arms extended toward him or covering their faces with their hands. The Crucifixion is commonly paired with representations of standing military saints under arcades on the opposite side of an enkolpion. Other iconographic types with a salvific connotation that gained popularity in the Palaiologan era, such as Daniel in the Lions' Den, are sometimes combined with standing military saints on the other side (Pitarakis 2015). The pairing of representations of the Virgin and Child

of the *Eleousa* type and military saints is also widespread (Ikonomaki-Papadopoulos, Pitarakis, and Tsigarida 2001, 98–113).

The proliferation of images of standing warrior saints on enkolpia reflects a universal trend also attested to in the iconography of coins and seals. In the twelfth century, George, Theodore, and Demetrios were introduced on coins, while the popularity of Theodore Stratelates, “the general,” on seals was linked to the militarization and development of an aristocracy in Byzantine society. Around 1148/49, Manuel I Komnenos had brought the venerated icon of St. Theodore Tiron from the cathedral church of Corinth to Constantinople (Magdalino 1993, 178). After having regularly displayed it at the palace for a period, he returned it to its home church with a new silver gilt revetment (Drpić 2012, 672–74; Pitarakis 2015, 339–40).

## Late Womb Amulets

The word *phylakterion* is also seen in the invocations found on a production of womb amulets from the tenth to the twelfth or early thirteenth century. These take the shape of circular medallions mass-produced in lead, bronze, silver, and enameled copper. The hallmark of these amulets is a Gorgon-like head with radiating serpents that have been identified as a representation of the *hystera*, or womb, in light of the protective formulae or spells accompanying the image (Spier 1993; Björklund 2016). The standard formula portrays the hystera as black; its “roaming” in the body is compared to the writhing of a serpent, the hissing of a dragon, or roaring of a lion, and at the end of the formula, the hystera is urged to become as gentle as a lamb.

The decorative repertoire of the amulets includes Christian invocations, the *Trisagion*, and the opening of Psalm 91 (90). The image that traditionally accompanies the hystera on the opposite side is the Holy Rider, piercing a recumbent figure or a dragon-like monster. Occurrences of Christ Healing the Woman with an Issue of Blood (Figure 6.1/ Color Plate 3A), the archangel Michael, and the Virgin orans are also seen.

## CONCLUSION

---

Various categories of amulets are valuable tools for exploring the evolution of Byzantine patterns of belief and their reception in artistic media of all scales. The artistic development of such pieces combined with the motivations and concerns generating demand for them allow a better understanding of their function and message. References to the liturgy or to ritualized practices of veneration play an important role in the relationship that the faithful had with their protective devices. In all contexts of life and in death, they were kept against the body of their owners, who cherished them as a means of communicating with God and the supernatural forces of the universe. Despite the evolution of their shapes and decorative repertory, analysis of the geographic and economic

distribution patterns of these objects displays a strong conservatism grounded in the continual transmission of the legends and beliefs that they convey.

## NEW PROSPECTS FOR RESEARCH

---

Recent archaeological discoveries show that the medico-magical gems of the Late Roman Empire continued to be used well into Late Antiquity along with new types of amulets and Christian objects for private devotion. During the sixth and seventh centuries, pilgrimage blessings and items used in private devotion of universal character progressively took on the function of amulets invested with salvific powers. Christian amuletic jewelry of the period, especially rings and pendants, is an area deserving of further investigation. Of particular value would be a more precise picture of the network among goldsmiths from the Holy Land to Constantinople and the diffusion of their productions. Another area in need of study is the transition from the so-called Solomon amulets of the sixth–seventh century to the medieval womb amulets popular during the eleventh to thirteenth century as well as the role of Constantinopolitan workshops in the diffusion of the latter. The pectoral cross as the universal apotropaic device throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire has been subject to broad analysis, but an extensive typology of the standard shapes illustrating their evolution remains lacking. Molds intended for the simultaneous casting of multiple but different pieces of jewelry are an important part of the testimony in this regard.

## REFERENCES

---

- Bellosi, L. 1996. *L'Oro di Siena: Il Tesoro di Santa Maria della Scala* (Milan).
- Björklund, H. 2016. "Classical Traces of Metamorphosis in the Byzantine Hystera Formula." *DOP* 70: 151–66.
- Brokalakis, Y. 2012. "Matrici di età protobizantina dall' impero bizantino." In *Ornamenta 4: Luoghi, artigiani e modi di produzione nell'oreficeria antica*, edited by I. Baldini and A. L. Morelli, 213–34 (Bologna).
- Brown, K. R. 1984. *The Gold Breast Chain from the Early Byzantine Period in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum*. Monographien 4 (Mainz).
- Cotsonis, J. A. 1994. *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses*, edited by S. A. Boyd and H. Maguire. Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection Publications 10 (Washington, DC).
- Drpić, I. 2012. "The Serres Icon of Saints Theodores," *BZ* 105, 2: 645–94.
- Drpić, I. 2019, "Manuel I Komnenos and the Stone of Unction," *BMGS* 43, 1: 60–82.
- Duling, D. C. 1983. "Testament of Solomon (First to Third Century A.D.)." In *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. 1, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, edited by J. H. Charlesworth, 935–88 (Garden City, NY).
- Durand, J. 2015. "Byzantium and Beyond: Relics of the Infancy of Christ." In *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, edited by C. Hahn and H. A. Klein, 253–88 (Washington, DC).



- Elsner, J. 2015. "Relics, Icon, and Architecture: The Material Articulation of the Holy in East Christian Art." In *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, edited by C. Hahn and H. A. Klein, 13–40 (Washington, DC).
- Frolow, A. 1961. *La relique de la Vraie Croix: Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*. Archives de l'Orient chrétien 7 (Paris).
- Glory of Byzantium*.
- Grierson, P. 1999. *Byzantine Coinage*. 2nd ed. Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection Publications 4 (Washington, DC).
- Hetherington, P. 1983. "A Purchase of Byzantine Relics and Reliquaries in Fourteenth-Century Venice." *Arte Veneta: Rivista di Storia dell'Arte* 37: 9–30.
- Hjort, Ø. 1993. "Augustus Christianus—Livia Christiana: *Sphragis* and Roman Portrait Sculpture." In *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Byzantium*, edited by L.S. Rydén and J. O. Rosenqvist, 99–112. Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions 4 (Uppsala).
- Horn, C. B., and R. R. Phenix Jr, eds. and trans. 2008. *John Rufus: The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus*, Writings of the Greco-Roman World 24 (Atlanta).
- Ikonomaki-Papadopoulos, Y., B. Pitarakis, and K. Loverdou-Tsigarida. 2001. *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi: Enkolpia* (Mt. Athos).
- Jolivet-Lévy, B. 2021. "Contribution à l'étude de l'iconographie de la Sagesse biblique à Byzance." In *Représentations et personnifications de la Sagesse dans l'Antiquité et au-delà*, edited by S. Anthonioz and C. Doguiez, 389–419. *Orient et Méditerranée* 35 (Leuven, Paris, and Bristol).
- Kartsonis, A. 1986. *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton).
- Kartsonis, A. 1994. "Protection against All Evil: Function, Use and Operation of Byzantine Historiated Reliquaries." *ByzForsch* 20: 73–102.
- Kessler, H. L. 2007. "The Word Made Flesh in Early Decorated Bibles." In *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, edited by J. Spier, 141–68 (New Haven and Fort Worth).
- Klein, H. A. 2004. "Constantine, Helena, and the Cult of the True Cross in Constantinople." In *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, edited by J. Durand and B. Flusin, 29–59. Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 17 (Paris).
- Lowther Clarke, W. K., trans. 1916. *St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of St. Macrina* (London). <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/macrina.asp>.
- Magdalino, P. 1993. *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos: 1143–1180* (Cambridge).
- Magdalino, P. 2004. "L'Église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople (VIIe/VIIIe–XIIIe siècles)." In *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, edited by J. Durand and B. Flusin, 15–30. Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 17 (Paris).
- Mango, C. 1992. "Diabolus Byzantinus." *DOP* 46 (= *Homo Byzantinus: Papers in Honor of Alexander Kazhdan*): 215–23.
- Maraval, P, ed. 1982. *Égérie: Journal de Voyage (Itinéraire)*. Sources Chrétiennes 296 (Paris).
- Pacha Miran, F. 2020. *Le décor de la Bible syriaque de Paris (BnF syr. 341) et son rôle dans l'histoire du livre chrétien*. Cahiers d'études syriaques 7 (Paris).
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2006. *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA). PG.
- Pitarakis, B. 2006a. *Les croix-reliquaires pectorales byzantines en bronze* (Paris).
- Pitarakis, B. 2006b. "Objects of Devotion and Protection." In *A People's History of Christianity*. Vol. 3, *Byzantine Christianity*, edited by D. Krueger, 164–81 (Minneapolis).
- Pitarakis, B. 2017. "Et il y eut guerre dans le ciel': À propos d'une amulette en or paléochrétienne au décor figuré de la collection Schlumberger au Cabinet des Médailles." In *Travaux et*

- mémoires* (= Mélanges Jean-Claude Cheynet), edited by B. Caseau, V. Prigent and A. Sopracasa, 519–36 (Paris).
- Pitarakis, B. 2014. “Magie, santé et piété privée: Les vertus du motif du lion sur les amulettes paléobyzantines.” In *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, edited by V. Dasen and J.-M. Spieser, 371–96 (Florence).
- Pitarakis, B. 2015. “Piété privée et processus de production artistique à Byzance: À propos d'un enkolpion constantinopolitain (XIIIe–XIVe siècle).” *DChAE* 36: 325–44.
- Raabe, R., ed. and trans. 1895. *Petrus der Iberer: Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts. Syrische Übersetzung einer um das Jahr 500 verfassten Griechischen Biographie* (Leipzig).
- Réunion des musées nationaux, ed. 1992. *Byzance: L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris).
- Schulz, H.-J. 1986. *Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression* (New York).
- Sodini, J.-P., P.-M. Blanc, and D. Pieri. 2010. “Nouvelles eulogies de Qal'at Sem'an (Fouilles 2007–2010).” *Travaux et mémoires* 16: 793–812.
- Spier, J. 1993. “Medieval Byzantine Magical Amulets and Their Tradition.” *JWCI* 56: 25–62.
- Spier, J. 2014. “An Antique Magical Book Used for Making Sixth-Century Byzantine Amulets?” In *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, edited by V. Dasen and J.-M. Spieser, 43–66 (Florence).
- Wilkinson, J. 1981. *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land: Newly Translated with Supporting Documents and Notes*. Rev. ed. (Jerusalem).
- Zuckerman, C. 2013. “Heraclius and the Return of the Holy Cross.” *Travaux et mémoires* 17 (= *Constructing the Seventh Century*): 197–218.



## CHAPTER 34

---

# IVORIES AND STEATITES

---

CAROLYN L. CONNOR

## IVORIES

---

OBJECTS carved from elephant ivory and from the soft stone steatite (also called soapstone) have long been identified with Byzantine art and culture, from Late Antiquity to the Late Byzantine period; they consist mainly of relief icons, and ceremonial and liturgical objects. The use of ivory and steatite for the crafting of a variety of products dates back much earlier, to ancient Greek, Roman, Near Eastern, and other ancient societies. Scholarship on these two media can be divided into object-based or descriptive approaches, as seen in catalogues of museum collections and international exhibition catalogues, and interpretive or thematic approaches in monographs or articles of an archaeological or art historical character. A collection of papers from a recent colloquium on the medium of ivory exemplifies the latter and provides a useful gauge of the current range of scholarly debate as well as future directions for inquiry (Bühl 2008). Ivory and steatite were not only used to fashion small objects, such as relief icons on panels, amulets, commemorative plaques, and containers; in addition, ivory was used as revetment on furniture, and steatite for sculptures in the round. Ivories, since they are more thoroughly studied, will be considered first.

No other organic material in the medieval world carried as high an intrinsic and symbolic value as elephant ivory. A consideration of the character and appearance of products crafted from ivory helps explain the high status of the medium. First, the size and availability of elephant tusks dictate the essential features of objects. Entire tusks could measure up to 300 cm in length. However, due to the constraints imposed by their internal and physical makeup, usable portions varied in their dimensions. Most often, tusks were sawed into plaques from approximately 10 to 30 cm high, 8 to 12 cm wide, and around 1 cm thick. Use in varied types of objects broaden this range: thin ivory relief panels applied to boxes average around 6 cm by 9 cm, and only .5 cm thick. Cylindrical boxes, called *pyxides*, required the use of a cross section of the tusk in the area of the pulp cavity, and were approximately 8 cm high by 11 cm in diameter. While

tusk dimensions dictated the maximum size of a piece, the difficulty of obtaining ivory was an essential factor in determining its value, and meant it was rarely used lavishly, but rather, sparingly. The increasing rarity of ivory from Late Antiquity into the Middle Byzantine era lent the substance and objects carved from it special status. Sources of elephant ivory were mainly Africa and India; its availability depended on successful trade with these areas. Other types of ivory (walrus, narwhal, hippopotamus, or mastodon) were seldom used by the Byzantines, although bone was frequently used as a substitute for ivory. The organic substance, called dentine, was fragile, fine-grained, and prone to cracking, so extreme care had to be taken in its preparation, storage, and carving. The skill required for the working of ivory combined with its rarity, especially in the period after Iconoclasm, contributed to its high value and status (Cutler 1985; Jehle 2008). The range of types of ivory objects, their uses and external characteristics, varies by period, but one feature they all share is that they are, for the most part, small and easily portable. As small-scale objects, they were intended to be touched and handled, examined, exchanged, and, in the case of icons, kissed, censed, and carried close to the body; the surfaces of most Byzantine ivories show clear signs of wear. Their size limitations, relative rarity, intrinsic value, and difficulty of working the medium all situated them among what are commonly known as the luxury arts, which include illuminated manuscripts, liturgical objects and metalwork, icons, jewelry, enamels, and precious silk and woolen textiles. As such, ivories also shared the predominant colorful and precious aesthetic of their sister arts, all of which represent craftsmen's skills passed down from antiquity. That ivories were routinely colored and gilded should have come as no surprise, for in all its aspects, ivory bears analysis and integration within the broader context of the other arts of Byzantium.

In the Early Byzantine era, ivory was frequently used in the production of diptychs. To create this form, the tusk was cut into panels that could be matched as pairs, and on whose exterior faces were carved figures in low or high relief within ornamental frames. Interior faces had uncarved panels, sometimes indented to hold wax for written messages; the pair was then hinged to open and close like a book. A famous example of such a diptych is the Nicomachi-Symmachi Diptych of ca. 400 CE, carved in a highly classicizing style reminiscent of Augustan stone reliefs; in style, iconography, and cultural connotations it appears to represent a conscious return to pagan ideals, but it is difficult to make this argument conclusively (Kitzinger 1980, fig. 63; Kinney 1994). A related group, the consular diptychs, exhibit a blend of classicism with a stiffer and more hieratic and official style, akin to that found in Theodosian metalwork. A representative example is the Diptych of Probianus, of ca. 400 (Kitzinger 1980, fig. 67). Used by the *vicarius* as a presentation piece to his friends and colleagues, it commemorated his tenure in office. Thanks to preserved records, the consular diptychs can usually be dated (Delbrueck 1929). The five-part "diptychs," assemblages of five panels forming single composition, may have been used as book covers, but none has been associated with a surviving manuscript. The most famous of these, the Barberini Panel of ca. 540, carries connotations of imperial conquest and God-protected rule in its iconography of triumph (Kitzinger 1980,

fig. 176). Another large category from this period is the Early Christian pyxides of the fifth to seventh centuries, cylindrical boxes made to contain the host or incense, or to serve a number of other possible purposes. These were carved in high relief with Old and New Testament scenes around their outer faces (Volbach 1976). Other ivory objects are more unusual; one find consists of the Eleutherna ivories of the fourth century. Discovered at the site of ancient Eleutherna in central Crete in 2002–2004, they comprise two series of mythological scenes, the more complete being from the Life of Achilles. These are thought to be revetments for ivory-clad boxes of unusual shapes. Such rare examples of Late Antique boxes raise issues of style and workshop/provenance in relation to other ivories (Vasiliadou 2011; Drandaki 2013). A well-known and precious survivor from Early Byzantium is the ivory chair known as the Cathedra of Bishop Maximian, of the mid-sixth century in Ravenna. It is composed of dozens of intricately carved ivory panels in low and high relief, some purely ornamental and others with imposing holy figures and scenes from the Old Testament story of Joseph and the Life of Christ. Its function must have been ceremonial, since without a wooden armature it would have been too fragile to function as a seat, except in the case of a diminutive bishop (Kitzinger 1980, figs. 171–75). Numerous small sculptures with unknown uses, dates, and provenance also survive from this period; by their style of carving they indicate the continuity of a craft originating deep in antiquity.

Preserved Middle Byzantine works in ivory are estimated at around 400 examples, more than in any other period (Cutler 1994). These were generally produced for a different set of purposes from those of the earlier period. Many served as devotional objects and consisted of single panels that were intended to be held in the hands and venerated as icons. Just as frequently, these panels belonged to triptychs, in which three panels were hinged so that they could be made to stand in an open or closed position, either revealing or enclosing a central figure or narrative scene. A few complete triptychs survive. Most triptych panels date from the mid- to late-tenth century, and some to the eleventh, although uncertainties about their dating persist. The Moscow panel showing Constantine VII crowned by Christ is a glorious though much damaged example. Through its inscriptions and subject matter, it clearly implies imperial patronage and usage, legitimacy, and divine selection, and likely served as a commemorative gift in 945 at the time of Constantine's accession as sole emperor. The panel has been dyed a deep reddish-brown color, and the frame shows coloration with red paint (*Glory of Byzantium*, fig. 140). The Harbaville Triptych exemplifies one of the most complex applications of the art of ivory carving (Figure 34.1). When open, the triptych reveals twenty saints and prophets appearing in groupings in the lower register and upper frame; in the upper register of the central panel is the *Deesis*, with the Virgin Mary and Christ framing an Enthroned Christ surrounded by angels. Twelve more saints appear in three registers on both of the closed wings.

Objects with perhaps secular uses can also be found from this period. A number of boxes of a type called “rosette caskets” consist of thin ivory panels carved with mythological or biblical subjects or scenes framed by rows of rosettes and applied with pegs to a wooden core. In the case of the Veroli Casket, a particularly finely carved example in a



FIGURE 34.1. The Harbaville Triptych: Deesis and Saints. Byzantine, from Constantinople, tenth century. Ivory, 24 × 28 cm. Musée du Louvre, inv. OA 3247. Photo: Daniel Arnaudet. ©RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

distinctive, “inflated” figural style, seemingly unrelated mythological subjects are seen on the panels of the lid and sides (Figure 34.2).

On some rosette caskets, bone has been substituted for ivory, especially for the bands of rosettes, but in general bone was used for the depiction of secular subject matter or ornamental motifs, while ivory was reserved for religious subjects. The caskets have invited speculation as to their uses and connotations, ranging from ladies’ jewelry boxes to receptacles for precious diplomatic gifts. Individual ivory plaques of the Middle Byzantine period carved with liturgical or other narrative scenes were sent as gifts to the West, where they were sometimes used to embellish the covers of books of the Scriptures; they appear surrounded by jeweled settings of the Carolingian and Ottonian periods. After the eleventh century, few Byzantine ivories were produced, likely due to the increasing rarity and expense of the medium, since the lands through which trade in elephant tusks took place were firmly under Arab control.

Beyond the recognition of a variety of types and functions of Byzantine ivories, issues of style, iconography, technique, and dating have been dealt with by numerous



**FIGURE 34.2.** Veroli Casket (from the cathedral of Veroli near Rome). Byzantine from Constantinople, tenth century. Bellerophon and Pegasus (*left panel*), Story of Iphigenia (*right panel*). Ivory and bone on wood, 11.5 × 40.5 × 15.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Inv.: 216-1865. V & A Images, London/Art Resource, NY.

scholars in individual studies. Among other hallmarks, the technique referred to as “undercutting” is not so remarkable as to distinguish an individual hand; closer technical inspection would no doubt be more productive. Stylistic mannerisms or the repeated use of singular motifs have been cited as ways to define or identify groups among stylistically related pieces, and sometimes even “hands,” of particular craftsmen; greater refinement of firsthand observations could be more decisive here as well. When it comes to the identities of individual craftsmen, as in ancient societies, these will probably remain unknown.

Workshops have also been part of the discussion. Although groups have been recognized in terms of technical and stylistic features, in the end, these can hardly be supported as a way to argue agency by a particular atelier or milieu (public, private, or imperial), provenance, or dating (Goldschmidt-Weitzmann 1930–1934). Questions of centers of production, Constantinople as opposed to Alexandria or some other city, have also proved inconclusive. For lack of strong evidence of provenance, some pieces representing particularly high quality or skill are often presumed to be products of a court or palace setting in the capital, but the argument is untenable except in the case of pieces depicting emperors or patrons. Even then, the precise function or role of a given piece is difficult to tease out at this chronological remove. Many uncertainties remain, a fecund area for further investigation.

As for dating, a small number of pieces have been associated with particular emperors through their subject matter and inscriptions. Otherwise, dates are difficult to establish except by constructing chronologies—a tricky business at best. Sometimes dating affects a whole group of stylistically related ivories, as in the case of the Romanos Ivory in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris (Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1977). Iconographic



comparisons have often been made between formulae found in ivories and the same scenes or subjects in mosaics, frescoes, or manuscript painting, providing some basis for localization and dating, but these too are inconclusive, except to illustrate the breadth of the artistic *koinē* or repertoire of this period. Some pieces attributed to the Middle Byzantine era hark back to pre-Iconoclastic iconography and are considered “retrospective,” but the rationale behind the practice remains unclear. In sum, most chronologies or efforts to establish hands or workshops, individual techniques, or precise datings of ivories have proved inconclusive.

A separate stylistic issue in the study of ivories turns on the use of the term “Macedonian Renaissance”. Applied primarily to ivories and illuminated manuscripts, the term has long been associated with a return to antique subject matter (mythology), iconographic motifs (personifications, etc.), and style under the Macedonian Dynasty in the tenth century (see Introduction, this volume). However, in the case of the famous Veroli Casket, it has recently been shown that the intent of the casket’s studied classicism was more likely to distance this technically brilliant piece from its religious counterparts, allowing it to serve more as a source of amusement or an example of technical virtuosity aimed at an elite audience, than as a revival of ancient thought. One scholar has argued that this beleaguered term has become a misleading misnomer, and that it should be abolished once and for all (Hanson 2010).

Future avenues of approach to the study of Byzantine ivories offer exciting possibilities for a better understanding this delicate and beautiful medium—for its beauty must indeed be considered, and considered carefully. What appears most desirable and beautiful today may have had a practical purpose and not an aesthetic one when it was made. What appears aesthetically attractive to us now may not even have been visible in the original product. Connoisseurship that has traditionally taken into account primarily the carving of ivory may have overlooked important considerations.

One new approach focuses on the original appearance of ivories of all periods. It has been shown that ivories were regularly dyed or painted in bright colors and overlaid with gold. As the evidence for polychromy accumulates, it becomes less likely that coloring was a random occurrence or can be discounted as the result of an impulse of a later owner, as is sometimes claimed, and that it was instead part of the original appearance of ivory objects of all types. Since color is known to be fugitive on the hard surface of ivory and that it gradually abrades, the coloring that we see today could also be an attempt at renewing original color that had become worn. This shift in perspective liberates the medium for a new integration with the prevailing aesthetic and value system inherent in other Byzantine art forms: manuscripts, enamels, textiles, mosaics and frescoes, jewelry, and ornamental sculpture, all of which were endowed with high intrinsic and symbolic value through their bold, bright coloring, often in combination with gold. Some ivories reveal a brown or green stain showing they were dyed, a practice parallel to that seen, for example, in manuscripts whose parchment was dyed purple for symbolic and intrinsic enhancement. Indeed, the ongoing study of polychromy on ivories might be called an archaeology of aesthetics, as a shift in perception

of the medium opens up possibilities for new and different directions and methods of analysis (Connor 1998; Jehle 2008).

Technical analysis aimed at discerning color traces and identifying the agents of pigments and dyes is one productive channel for integrating polychromy on ivories with discussions of comparable media. Noninvasive methods of examining art objects are constantly being developed and surely will be developed in the future to refine our understanding of polychromy. Scanning electron microscopy and X-ray spectrometry, sampling for pigment analysis (chemical makeup), and close visual inspection have not yet been adequately exploited in the examination of ivories, for example, for small technical details revealing marks left by the use of a particular tool—one way of determining the work of a specific workshop or one responsible for two or more pieces. In the end, there is no substitute for firsthand, hands-on, and close-range visual/microscopic examination of ivory objects along with the application of informed laboratory methods if progress in understanding ivories is to be made (Banerjee 2008; Bühl et. al, eds. 2008; Connor 2008; Cutler 2008).

Along with the need for sophisticated technical analysis is the need for change in current practices in museums and collections, worldwide. The routine “cleaning” of ivories, which has taken place for so long, should be discontinued in order to preserve what few traces of color remain in cracks, crevasses, and corners. The taste for “pure” and uncolored ivory, in vogue since the Renaissance, has resulted in the removal of color traces in order to sanitize or regularize their appearance to conform to the modern taste for monochrome sculpture; as with the realization that most Western Medieval wood and stone sculpture was polychrome, conservation of ivories needs to be reconsidered taking into account their original surfaces. The taking of casts of ivories, which was a common practice in the nineteenth century, was shown to be destructive of their surface and discontinued. Today, the use of solvents and other agents to “clean” pieces on permanent display in museums as well as those in storage, at regular intervals, is potentially destroying evidence of color that future analysis might find productive. Another kind of coloration, the stain or residue from the dyeing of ivory, is more difficult to remove, and persists unmistakably on a number of well-known pieces, such as the Troyes Casket, Berlin Scepter (or Comb), and plaque with the Coronation of Constantine VII by Christ (*Glory of Byzantium*, nos. 139, 140, and 141). These might be analyzed to reveal the makeup of the dyes used. Preservation of traces of coloration on ivories needs to become a priority in museum practice, to protect this precious evidence for analysis according to the most recent and evolving methods, and future methods not yet developed (Connor 2008).

The groundwork has been laid, but we have only scratched the surface, for there is still much potential for the future investigation of multiple aspects of Byzantine ivories. There is still no consensus on issues of dating, function, techniques of production, and provenance. Some of these might be advanced through technical analysis, and others through interdisciplinary approaches, including especially archaeology. The conversation might be extended to include medievalists studying cultures to the



FIGURE 34.3. Crucifixion. Late Byzantine, thirteenth century. Steatite, 58 × 46 mm. British Museum, PY 1972, 0701.1 © The Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY.

east and west of Byzantium who have developed their own methods or perceptions. Ivories seen in relation to the broad spectrum of Byzantine diplomacy, foreign trade, and cultural exchange have much to reveal. Interdisciplinary approaches that can be further explored include art historical and historical, literary, geographical, epigraphical, archaeological, and all manner of scientific and technical aspects of the medium.

## STEATITES

Steatite, as a medium for carving small relief icons, pectoral crosses, and amulets in the Middle Byzantine era, bears many resemblances to ivory (Figure 34.3).

The stone was more easily obtained than ivory, and therefore did not have the same precious connotations; it occurs in a number of colors and varies in its quality and hardness. The most desirable color seems to have been pale green. Like ivory, steatite is a fragile material and prone to cracking; also like ivory, it can take a sharp, crisp line when skillfully carved. Steatites often appear worn from use, probably for the same reasons as ivory: they were handled in the course of personal devotions or use as adornment. In fact, if it were not for its green hue, steatite could in some instances almost be mistaken for ivory; some icons carved in steatite are almost doubles of those in ivory, suggesting that carvers likely worked in both media. They also share the characteristic of having been all or partially gilded and colored, as for example in an icon with the Koimesis in Vienna (*Glory of Byzantium*, 102; cf. an icon with the same subject, in ivory, in New York, no. 101), and an icon with the *Hetoimasia* and Four Saints in the Louvre (*Glory of Byzantium*, 103), both dating to the tenth century. Color and gilding do not adhere well on steatite, as on ivory. Around 200 Byzantine steatites survive, the majority dating after the tenth century and into the fifteenth. It appears that steatite, which came into regular use by the Byzantines for the carving of icons in the tenth and eleventh centuries, became a substitute for ivory from this time on. Future studies of steatites will likely hinge on their applications as extensions of the craft of ivory, for example, efforts to identify workshops. Their study will benefit from hands-on observation and technical analysis (Kalavrezou-Maxeiner 1985).

## REFERENCES

- Bannerjee, A. 2008. "Non-Destructive Investigation of Ivory by FTIR and Raman Spectroscopy." In *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*, edited by G. Bühl, A. Cutler, and A. Effenberger, 1–8 (Wiesbaden).
- Bühl, G. 2008. "The Making of Early-Byzantine Pyxides." In *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*, edited by G. Bühl, A. Cutler, and A. Effenberger, 9–16 (Wiesbaden).
- Bühl, G., A. Cutler, and A. Effenberger, eds. 2008. *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs* (Wiesbaden).
- Connor, C. 1998. *The Color of Ivory: Polychromy on Byzantine Ivories* (Princeton).
- Connor, C. 2008. "Color on Late Antique and Byzantine Ivories: Problems and Challenges of Conservation." In *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*, edited by G. Bühl, A. Cutler, and A. Effenberger, 31–35 (Wiesbaden).
- Cutler, A. 1985. *The Craft of Ivory* (Washington, DC).
- Cutler, A. 1994. *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th Centuries)* (Princeton).

- Cutler, A. 2008. "Resemblance and Difference: Carving in Byzantium and Ottonian Germany in the Ivory Century." In *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*, edited by G. Bühl, A. Cutler, and A. Effenberger, 37–52 (Wiesbaden).
- Delbrueck, R. 1929. *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Leipzig and Berlin).
- Drandaki, A., D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, and A. Tourta. 2013. *Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Glory of Byzantium*.
- Goldschmidt, A., and K. Weitzmann. 1930–1934 repr. 1979. *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.–XIII. Jahrhunderts*. 2 vols. (Berlin).
- Hanson, J. 2010. "The Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Renaissance." In *A Companion to Byzantium*, edited by L. James, 338–50 (London).
- Jehle, H. "Technologische Aspekte an den Elfenbeinarbeiten des Museums für Byzantinische Kunst." In *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*, edited by G. Bühl, A. Cutler, and A. Effenberger, 139–47 (Wiesbaden).
- Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, I. 1985. *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*. 2 vols. (Vienna).
- Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, I. 1997. "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory." *DOP* 31: 305–25.
- Kinney, D. 1994. "The Iconography of the Ivory Diptych Nicomachorum-Symmachorum." *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 37: 64–96.
- Kitzinger, E. (1977) 1980. *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd–7th Century*, esp. 34–48; 94–96 (Cambridge, MA).
- Vasiliadou, M. 2011. "The Ivory Plaques of Eleutherna and Their Workshop." In *Second Hellenistic Studies Workshop, Alexandria, 4–11 July, 2010: Proceedings*, edited by K. Savvopoulos, 66–76, 190–96 (Alexandria).
- Volbach, W. F. 1976. *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*. 3rd ed. (Mainz).

## CHAPTER 35

---

# CERAMICS

---

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA - BAKIRTZI

## INTRODUCTION

---

EARTH mixed with water in the form of clay was perhaps the most widespread material used to produce articles that accompanied and served everyday needs from pre-historic times down to the present. When soluble, malleable clay is transformed into ceramic form by firing, it acquires durability over time, which neither wooden, glass, nor even metal objects possess. In both the ancient and the Byzantine world, ceramic objects continued to be used in all areas of human life and activities, from manufacturing ceramics such as bricks and roof tiles to lighting devices and even religious items such as containers for holy water or holy oil. Byzantine pottery, which long remained a neglected field in Byzantine archaeology and art, has in recent years attracted considerable interest, coinciding with the simultaneous shift in Byzantine studies to the study of everyday life.

Vessels primarily associated with food, specifically with the transport and storage of foodstuffs on the one hand, and with food production, serving, and consumption on the other, formed the overwhelming majority of ceramics during the Byzantine period. Ceramic vessels used for large-scale transportation and storage as well as the preparation of food tend to be cruder, less embellished pieces. These types continue throughout Byzantine times, and will be dealt with by purpose. Items for the table, which varied more in form and decoration, will be considered by era.

## COARSE WARES

---

### Transport Vessels

During the Early Byzantine period, the chief transport vessel employed for commercial purposes continued to be the ceramic *amphora*, antiquity's preeminent container for

cartage. Used mainly for liquids, primarily wine and oil, this vessel preserved its ergonomic shape with two handles and a body appropriately shaped to be moved and loaded onto ships. For safety, the bodies of Byzantine amphorae acquired sparse or dense striations made with the help of the potter's wheel and some type of pointed tool. Taking into consideration characteristics such as fabric, shape, and particularly the form of handles and bottom, scholars studying Early Byzantine amphorae have classified them into various typological systems (Riley 1979; Riley 1982). Research has also dealt with the production centers for various types, evaluating excavation finds and investigating the chronological and geographic contexts in which they were used and traded (Empereur and Picon 1986; Demesticha 2003; Pieri 2007; Opaıt 2010); contents of these vessels have been studied as well (Rothschild-Boros 1981). After the seventh century, amphorae could be differentiated into two main types, one rounder with small handles, and a second type with an elongated body and high vertical handles (Günsenin 1993; Bakirtzis 2003, 70–88). One of the main centers of production in this period was Ganos on the Thracian coast in the Sea of Marmara (Günsenin 1993). The use and consequently the production of amphorae ceased sometime in the fourteenth century, when they were replaced by wooden barrels (Bakirtzis 2003, 84–85).

## Storage Vessels

The premier storage container for the Byzantines was the ceramic *pithos*. Over the course of centuries, it preserved its ancient Greek name as well as its general shape and function, which was storage of large quantities of liquids, chiefly wine and oil, as well as dry foodstuffs such as grains. Smaller pithoi were used for dried fruits, and salted/cured meats and fish. The pithos could be rounded or elongated, but it always had a swollen belly, a very short neck, and a wide, thick rim with a flat upper surface to receive a lid. Pithoi often terminated in a button-shaped bottom, which helped secure them in the ground, given that they were usually meant to be embedded in underground, suitably formed storerooms (Bakirtzis 2003, 110–21; Giannopoulou 2011, 44–45).

## Cooking Pots

Ceramic vessels used in food preparation are referred to by the general term *cooking pots*. Their main characteristic was the flame-resistant property of their clay, since their use required contact with fire. The preeminent cooking pot was known in the Early Byzantine period as the *chytra*, and later as the *tsoukka* or *tsykalion* (Bakirtzis 2003, 31–43). It had either a rounded body with flat base so that it could rest directly over fire or a rounded bottom for support by a stand, normally made of metal. A chytra or tsoukka had almost no neck, an outward-turned rim appropriately formed for a lid, and one or

two handles, though there are also examples without handles. During Early Byzantine times, wheel-made striations around the chytra's body must have helped with shifting the vessel safely.

In addition, there were *teganía* and *sfoungatera*, shallower ceramic cooking pots in the form of a modern casserole or frying pan. Normally this type of vessel had a rather flat bottom, vertical or slightly convex walls, and rims often with flanges for lids. These had one long handle or two short ones set opposite each other and attached below the rim (Bakirtzis 2003, 48–52). Vessels in the form of spouted jugs used for boiling water also belong to the category of cooking pots (Petridis 2013, 45–46). Cooking pots were sometimes glazed on their interiors mainly in the Late Byzantine period.

## TABLEWARES

---

### Wares of the Early Byzantine Period

The study of Early Byzantine tablewares shows that generally such vessels continued and developed traditions of corresponding Roman ones, specifically the Red Slip Wares of the first Christian centuries (Hayes 1972). Plates, a significant number of which were large, were used for serving food. Smaller plates and small bowls also met dining needs, perhaps for sauces and dips. Vases in the form of a *skyphos*, mug, or small hemispherical cup were used for drinking, despite the fairly widespread use of glass utensils for this purpose in this period (see Antonaras chapter, this volume).

Production centers for tableware in the Early Byzantine world—chiefly that of the Aegean—included the products of Asia Minor workshops such as Phocian Red Slip Ware formerly known as Late Roman C Ware, which circulated widely from the fifth to seventh century (Hayes 1972, 323–70; Vaag 2005). Products of workshops in North Africa, particularly present-day Tunisia, known as African Red Slip Ware, were already playing a leading role in the tablewares market in the fourth century (Hayes 1972, 13–299), supplying both Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean. Produced in large numbers, these vessels included a significant number of large, impressive plates (Bonifay 2004, 155–210). Gradually, local production by smaller regional centers is observed. Of special interest is the production of Painted Wares, mainly those of Central Greece and Crete (Hayes 1972, 412–13; Petridis 2013, 60–68).

Apart from the expanded needs these wares served in terms of shape, form, and size, tablewares displayed decoration; it is through this that we can study aesthetics, choices, and preferences. While Roman traditions were continued in basic forms, notable changes are observed in embellishment. The spread of Christianity and the new Christian way of life introduced a new repertoire with Christian symbols such as crosses, the *Chi-Rho* and others, as well as depictions of scenes from the Old and New Testaments (Hayes 1972, 228–29, 271–81, 348–49, 363–68). The use of these religious



motifs should not be considered as associated exclusively with worship. Rather, it probably suggests early Christians' need to invoke the divine presence and protection of their households.

## Wares of the Middle Byzantine Period

A decisive role in the appearance of tableware was played by glazing the surfaces of ceramic vessels. Although this practice can be dated as early as the fourth century in some regions (Cvetićanin 2006), the broader establishment and spread of the process is estimated as having begun in the seventh century (Hayes 1992, 13–14).

The glazing of ceramic surfaces, whose original and chief purpose was to waterproof the porous ceramic body of vessels, rapidly evolved into a decisive factor in the aesthetics of ceramic tableware. Byzantine vases were covered in a lead glaze, a type very widespread until recently, especially in Eastern Mediterranean countries. Its property of turning transparent and glossy at relatively low temperatures and the fact that it could easily be given color by adding the oxides of other metals made it especially popular.

Based on excavation evidence from the seventh to the early thirteenth centuries, glazed vessels made of white clay known as Glazed White Ware gradually experienced greater dissemination, particularly in the empire's urban centers, spreading from these to their peripheries (Hayes 1992, 12–34). It is generally accepted that these characteristic Glazed White Wares were produced in the area of Constantinople itself. Displaying a variety of shapes of vessels and specialized utensils, they clearly served a sophisticated diet and demanding dining methods. The main types of decoration for white clay ceramic vases were painting and relief. One form of painted decoration is found on the extensively-studied Polychrome Ware, for which glaze colors such as green, blue, yellow, red, and black (primarily for outlines) were employed (Figure 35.1) (Morgan 1942, 64–70; Hayes 1992, 35–37; Sanders 2001).

Similar polychrome painted decoration was applied to tiles also made of white clay, which were mainly intended for covering walls and other architectural elements (Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001; Figure 8.3). Polychrome tiles are also used to create icons depicting saints. A recent publication of a large collection of such tiles enriched our knowledge on the subject and renewed earlier suggestions of Nicomedia as a production site for these ceramics (Gerstel 2008–2009).

Relief decoration produced with a stamp or mold depicted geometric motifs, themes from the world of flora and fauna, or, more rarely, human figures (Hayes 1992, 18–29; Armstrong 2001). These appeared in relief beneath green or yellow glaze, successfully imitating the appearance of metal vessels with repoussé decoration (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 195–96).

Constantinopolitan vases with their light-colored appearance and elegant decoration, used as semiprecious tableware, monopolized markets till around the mid-eleventh century,



**FIGURE 35.1.** Polychrome Ware bowl with a bird (eleventh century). Benaki Museum, Athens. © Benaki Museum.

and excavation finds demonstrate that they continued to attract interest by buyers until the end of the twelfth (Laiou 2012, 141; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 194–98; Sanders 2000, 164–66). The advantages of white clay and, by extension, the difficulty of finding a means of competing with it, were only overcome when the practice of covering reddish clay with a white slip was adopted in the late eleventh century (Sanders 2003, 40; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 198–200). This ensured the highly desirable light-colored surface, which allowed the highlighting of the decoration, both of different forms of painted ornament as well as of incision through the slip layer, which would emerge as the preeminent decoration on tableware in Byzantium during the Middle and Late Byzantine periods.

Engraved decoration was achieved by incising through the layer of white or whitish slip with the help of a pointed tool. This decorative technique is known as *sgraffito* or *sgraffiato*, from the Italian verb *sgraffire* or *sgraffiare*, meaning “to graze, incise, scratch.” Incision revealed the bare red surface of the clay, and the incised lines appeared as red against the white background of the slip to form the decorative motif. The final appearance of the decoration was defined by the glaze, which made the ceramic surface vivid and shiny, highlighting the dark incised lines of the decorative motif against the light-colored slipped background. Over a long course of experimentation and exploration,

Byzantine potters would experiment with the width of incision and explore its aesthetic possibilities (Morgan 1942, 115–66; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999). Fine-sgraffito Ware primarily yielded lace-like decoration with spiral motifs embedded in medallions in the center of the floor and on bands surrounding the walls of vases. However, themes involving human figures, animals, and birds were also depicted using the same fine incision (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 27–36). Vases that formed the cargo of a ship wrecked between Pelagonessos and Alonessos in the Northern Sporades around the mid-twelfth century displayed fine-sgraffito decoration of exceptionally high quality (Figure 35.2 left) (Kritzias 1971; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 122–42).

After the mid-twelfth century, a coarser type of incision appeared that gradually became established and preeminent. With Incised-sgraffito Ware, the incised line displayed greater breadth and therefore appeared more intense. The coarse line acquired power and rendered themes that extended freely over the ground or



**FIGURE 35.2.** (*left*) Fine-sgraffito plate with a cheetah chasing a deer (mid-twelfth century). Nea Anchialos Collection, Volos—Greece. © Greek Archaeological Service. (*middle*) Incised-sgraffito plate with a musician and a dancer (late twelfth century). Palace of the Grand Master, Rhodes, Dodecanese—Greece. © Greek Archaeological Service. (*right*) Champlévé plate with griffons fighting against an enormous bird (early thirteenth century). Benaki Museum, Athens. © Benaki Museum.

were incorporated in medallions. Such themes included musicians and dancers (Figure 35.2 middle), and hunters and warriors interpreted as the heroes of *Akritic Songs* (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 46–56). Most of the decoration on the glazed tableware that formed the cargo of a ship wrecked in the open waters off the island of Kastellorizo near Rhodes in the early thirteenth century was rendered in the incised-sgraffito technique. Fish and birds are depicted among sea creatures and floral guilloches (Philotheou and Michailidou 1986; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 143–57). Another interesting example of incised-sgraffito decoration appears on the glazed wares found on a recently discovered shipwreck at Kavalliani in the Southern Euboean Gulf (Koutsouflakis and Tsompanidis 2018).

The removal of the entire layer of slip on the ground of the scene to highlight the figures on it in a sort of low relief led to another group of tablewares. This change in the relation between light and dark parts of the decoration in the late twelfth- to early-thirteenth century produced perhaps the most impressive vases in Byzantine ceramics, known internationally by their French name *champlevé*, which describes precisely the technique of “removing” (*lever*) the (back) “ground” (*champs*) (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 57–70). The repertoire of the *champlevé* group, like that of the group of incised-sgraffito, included many human figures. Grueling fights with wild beasts and frightful dragons are also depicted (Figure 35. 2 right); a row of adorable bunnies and lively fawns is also sometimes included.

Characteristics of Middle Byzantine vases included, on the one hand, care expended in their production, both in shape and form as well as decoration, and on the other, imitation of metal vessels. Such pieces were produced for consumers who were rising financially and seeking social recognition, a public that apparently had high aesthetic requirements and found in glazed vessels a substitute for valuable metal ones with sophisticated decoration that it desired but could not afford to acquire (Laiou 2002, 746–48; Laiou and Morrisson 2007, 121). These glazed vessels were created by an extensive standardized production, accompanied by originality in inspiration and quality. These pieces must have been produced by sizable organized workshops whose products traveled great distances to reach their destinations. The two major shipwrecks in the Northern Sporades and Kastellorizo show that sea transport, if not the leading form of shipment, was at least widespread (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 214–15; Koutsouflakis 2020, 457–62).

Archaeometric research has been very helpful in the study of Byzantine ceramics. For glazed ceramics in particular, clay analyses have assisted chiefly in the attribution of groups of vases to specific workshops. A recent archaeometric study by a group of researchers suggested quite convincingly that well-known categories of Middle Byzantine ceramics present similarities in their clay, and may be attributed to the production of workshops in Chalkis, Euboea (Waksman et. al 2014; Waksman 2018). This confirms the large production of Middle Byzantine ceramic workshops and transport of their products by sea.

## Wares of the Late Byzantine Period

From the thirteenth century, pottery finds from excavations indicate marked activity by local-regional glazed pottery workshops throughout the Byzantine world. Prevailing conditions in the empire following the Latin conquest in 1204, with the growth of regional centers and financial forces dominant at the time, must have been among the main reasons that regional workshops for glazed pottery became active in this period (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 207). This was aided by a technological advance in production of these peripheral workshops: the adoption of firing using tripod stilts set between glazed vases. The possibility of setting vases in columns in the kiln without becoming stuck to one another when the glaze liquefied during the rise of temperature allowed better use of the kiln's space, thereby resulting in fuel economy and increased production (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1985).

Late Byzantine glazed ceramic tableware presents significant differences when compared to that of the Middle Byzantine period. Most vessels were smaller and deeper, and generally took the form of hemispherical bowls (Vroom 2003, 233–34). As regards decoration, which continued as a rule to be sgraffito, Late Byzantine wares displayed eclecticism, with the use of both fine and broad incision. We also observe the removal of large surfaces from the layer of slip to depict dark-colored elements. A significant innovation on vases of this period was the chromatic enhancement of sgraffito decoration with brownish-yellow and green brushstrokes, produced from iron and copper oxides, respectively. Monochrome plain sgraffito decoration persisted, though it was now confined to darker glaze color tones. In this tendency toward darker tones, shades of yellow are predominant, although there are also examples of green glaze.

A family of vases with fine compact fabric, exceptionally chosen decoration, and shiny glaze, known as Zeuxippus Ware, brings together all these characteristics in a pioneering fashion, which would mark glazed ceramics in the Late Byzantine period (Megaw 1968; Waksman and François 2004–2005).

Apart from the general characteristics of glazed tableware previously described, one can observe the growth of special distinguishing features and a specific decorative repertoire by groups; these correspond to and may be identified with different production centers (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 207–14). Excavation finds demonstrate that Thessaloniki was an active production center for glazed pottery during this era. The depiction of a bird with its body rendered by the removal of the slip, often standing between pointed branches, is so common that it has become known as the “bird of Thessaloniki.” However, recent finds in excavations for the Istanbul Metro have suggested that workshops in Constantinople also employed this decorative motif (Papanikola-Bakirtzi and Waksman 2015). Finds from the city of Serres in Northern Greece leave no doubt that a large and very impressive group of vases with sgraffito decoration and vivid brownish-yellow and green coloring was produced in this city, an important trading and agricultural center in the Strymon River region (Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Dauterman Maguire and Maguire 1992). And a multitude of waste products

from pottery production found in the foothills of Mt. Rhodope on the Via Egnatia at the site of Mikro Pisto in Thrace indicates that in the Late Byzantine period, glazed pottery workshops were active not only in cities and villages, but along major roads, where the overland movement of goods was easier. The vases from Mikro Pisto have characteristic sgraffito decoration enhanced by brownish-yellow touches, a style close to the vase decoration of Zeuxippus Ware (Zekos 2003). Pergamon was one case of a glazed pottery production center in Asia Minor during this period, as well. Monochrome plain-sgraffito wares in yellow or more rarely, green shades, as well as sgraffito wares enhanced by brownish-yellow touches and related to the pottery of Zeuxippus are attributed to the production of this city (Spieser 1996, 45–48; Waksman and Spieser 1997).

The phenomenon of the decentralization of glazed pottery workshops in the Byzantine world at this time also appears in Cyprus, although the island had been cut off from the Byzantine state in 1191, setting its historical course as an autonomous feudal kingdom under the dynasty of French Crusaders, the Lusignans. Archaeological evidence shows that glazed pottery workshops were operating in the Paphos region from the early thirteenth century (Figure 35.3).

Production activity in those workshops continued until near the end of the fourteenth century (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1996, 55–137). It would appear that glazed pottery workshops were also active in the area of Enkomi, Famagusta, during fourteenth



**FIGURE 35.3.** Brown and Green Incised-sgraffito bowl with a fish (mid-thirteenth century). The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, Cyprus. © Collection of the The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia—Cyprus.

century (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1989). In the fifteenth century, products from a new glazed ceramics production center, Lapithos in the northern part of the island, flooded the Cypriot tableware market (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1996, 138–212, and 2019). Cypriot glazed pottery represents a continuation of the Byzantine pottery tradition in terms of technology, with an emphasis on sgraffito decoration enhanced chromatically by copper and iron oxides and the use of lead glazes. Its iconography, however, soon adopted motifs under the influence of the “Crusader environment,” including knights in armor, richly dressed ladies, coats-of-arms, and others (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2012, 214).

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

---

In conclusion, glazed ceramics, mostly in the form of small or medium-size hemispherical bowls with monochrome or colored sgraffito decoration, were the typical tablewares used in the Byzantine world during the last century before the fall of Constantinople. The ever-increasing interest of Byzantinists in ceramic finds as well as the progress of archaeological and archaeometric research promise a better understanding of the ceramics used in Byzantium.

Study of the technology of Byzantine ceramics, above all of the glazes and slips used by Byzantine workshops, are subjects that should be further explored. Iconography is an area on which scholarly interest was focused from an early date; this interest, however, has languished in recent years. The study of new finds can provide much interesting evidence to help us understand the Byzantines’ aesthetic preferences. In light of new finds and studies, there is also an opportunity to re-examine views and theories concerning the influences to which Byzantine pottery was subjected, as well as those it exerted, for example on Italian pottery. The further study of the use and commerce in ceramic wares in the Byzantine world and the factors that influenced both production and trade will also contribute to a better understanding of the Byzantine world.

## REFERENCES

---

- Armstrong, P. 2001. “From Constantinople to Lakedaimon: Impressed White Wares.” In *Mosaic: Festschrift for A. H. S. Megaw*, edited by J. Herrin, M. Mullett, and C. Otten-Froux, British School at Athens Studies 8, 57–67 (London).
- Bakirtzis, Ch. 2003. *Βυζαντινά Τσουκαλολάγηνα*. 2nd ed. (Athens).
- Bonifay, M. 2004. *Etudes sur la céramique romaine tardive d’Afrique*. British Archaeological Reports, International Series 1301 (Oxford).
- Cvjetičanin, T. 2006. *Late Roman Glazed Pottery: Glazed Pottery from Moesia Prima, Dacia Ripensis, Dacia Mediterranea and Dardania*. Archaeological Monographs 17 (Belgrade).
- Demesticha, S. 2003. “Amphora Production on Cyprus during the Late Roman Period.” In *Actes de VIIe Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée, Thessaloniki, 11–16 October 1999*, edited by Ch. Bakirtzis, 469–76 (Athens).

- Empereur, J.-Y., and M. Picon. 1986. "À la recherche des fours d'amphores." In *Recherches sur les amphores grecques*, edited by J.-Y. Empereur and Y. Garlan, 103–26. Bulletin du Correspondance Hellénique Supplément 13 (Athens).
- Gerstel, S. E. J. 2008–2009. "The Nikomedia Workshop: New Evidence on Byzantine Tiles." *Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 66/67: 5–53.
- Gerstel, S. E. J., and J. A. Lauffenburger. 2001. *A Lost Art Rediscovered: The Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium* (Baltimore and University Park, PA).
- Giannopoulou, M. 2011. *Pithoi: Technology and History of Storage Vessels through the Ages*. British Archaeological Reports, International Series 2140 (Oxford).
- Günsenin, N. 1993. "Ganos, centre de production d'amphores à l'époque Byzantine." *Anatolia Antiqua* 2, no. 1: 193–201.
- Hayes, J. W. 1972. *Late Roman Pottery: A Catalogue of Roman Fine Wares* (London).
- Hayes, J. W. 1992. *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul. Vol. 2: The Pottery* (Princeton).
- Koutsouflakis, G. 2020. "The Transportation of Amphorae, Tableware and Foodstuffs in the Middle and Late Byzantine Period. The Evidence from Aegean Shipwrecks." In *Multidisciplinary Approaches to Food and Foodways in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by S. Y. Waksman, 447–81 (Lyon).
- Koutsouflakis, G., and Tsompanidis, A. 2018. "The Kavalliani Shipwreck: A New Cargo of Byzantine Glazed Tableware from the South Euboean Gulf, Aegean." In *XIth Congress AIECM3 on Medieval and Modern Period Mediterranean Ceramics Proceedings*, Vol. 1, edited by F. Yenişehirlioğlu, 39–48 (Ankara).
- Kritzas, Ch. 1971. "Το βυζαντινόν ναυάγιον Πελαγοννήσου—Αλοννήσου." *Archaeologika Analekta ex Athinon* 4, no. 2: 176–82.
- Laiou, A. E. 2002. "Exchange and Trade. Seventh-Twelfth Centuries." In *The Economic History of Byzantium from the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, edited by A. E. Laiou. 3 vols. Dumbarton Oaks Studies 39, vol. 2: 697–770 (Washington, DC).
- Laiou, A. E. 2012. "Regional Networks in the Balkans in the Middle and Late Byzantine Periods." In *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, edited by C. Morrisson, 125–46 (Washington, DC).
- Laiou, A. E., and C. Morrisson. 2007. *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge).
- Megaw, P. (A. H. S.). 1968. "Zeuxippus Ware." *Annual of the British School in Athens* 63: 67–88.
- Morgan, Charles H., II. 1942. *Corinth XI, The Byzantine Pottery*. Results of Excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (Cambridge, MA).
- Opaït, A. 2010. "Pontic Wine in the Athenian Market." In *Κεραμική της Ύστερης Αρχαιότητας από τον ελληνικό χώρο (30ς–70ς αι.)*, edited by D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi and D. Kousoulakou. Publications of Archaeological Institute of Macedonian and Thracian Studies 8, 108–30 (Thessaloniki).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D. 1985. "Τριποδίσκοι ψησίματος των βυζαντινών και μεταβυζαντινών αγγείων." In *Αμμήτος: Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Μ. Ανδρόνικο*, edited by M. D. Tiverios and Ch. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, 641–48 (Thessaloniki).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D. 1989. "Medieval Pottery from Enkomi, Famagusta." In *Recherches sur la Céramique Byzantine*. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'École Française d'Athènes et l'Université de Strasbourg II (Athènes 8–10 avril 1987). *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, Supplément XVIII, edited by V. Déroche and J.-M. Spieser, 233–46 (Athens).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D. 1996. *Μεσαιωνική εφυαλωμένη κεραμική της Κύπρου: Τα εργαστήρια Πάφου και Λαπήθου* (Thessaloniki).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D. 2012. "Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market: An Approach." In *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, edited by C. Morrisson, 193–216 (Washington, DC).



- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D. 2019. "Medieval Glazed Pottery from the Soil of Lapithos." In *Ceramic Art from the Soil of Lapithos*, edited by D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, 105–25 (Nicosia).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D., ed. 1999. *Byzantine Glazed Ceramics: The Art of Sgraffito* (Athens).
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi D., E. Dauterman Maguire, and H. Maguire. 1992. *Ceramic Art from Byzantine Serres* (Urbana, IL). Exhibition catalogue.
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D., and Y. S. Waksman. 2015. "Thessaloniki Ware Reconsidered." In *Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramics in the Eastern Mediterranean-Fact and Fiction: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Byzantine and Ottoman Archaeology, Amsterdam, 21–23 October 2011*, edited by J. Vroom, 227–48 (Turnhout).
- Petridis, P. 2013. *Πρωτοβυζαντινή Κεραμική του Ελλαδικού χώρου* (Athens).
- Philotheou, G., and M. Michailidou. 1986. "Βυζαντινά πινάκια από το φορτίο ναυαγισμένου πλοίου κοντά στο Καστελλόριζο." *Meletes A', Archaeologikon Deltion* 41: 271–330.
- Pieri, D. 2007. "Les centres de production d'amphores en Méditerranée orientale durant l'Antiquité tardive: quelques remarques." In *LRCW2. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean: Archaeology and Archaeometry*, edited by M. Bonifay and J.-C. Tréglia. *British Archaeological Reports, International Series 1662* (ii), 611–25 (Oxford).
- Riley, J. A. 1979. "The Coarse Pottery from Berenice." In *Excavations at Sidi Khrebish-Benghazi (Berenice)*, edited by J. A. Lloyd. *Lybia Antiqua Supp. V/2*, 91–467 (Tripoli).
- Riley, J. A. 1982. "New Light on Relations between the Eastern Mediterranean and Carthage in the Vandal and Byzantine Periods: The Evidence from the University of Michigan Excavations." In *Actes du Colloque sur la céramique antique, Carthage 23–24 juin 1980*. *Carthage Dossiers* 1, 111–22 (Tunis).
- Rothschild-Boros, M. C. 1981. "The Determination of Amphora Contents." In *Archaeology and Italian Society: Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval Studies*, edited by G. Barker and R. Hodges. *British Archaeological Reports, International Series 102*, 79–89 (Oxford).
- Sanders, G. D. R. 2000. "New Relative and Absolute Chronologies for 9th to 13th Century Glazed Wares at Corinth: Methodology and Social Conclusions." In *Byzanz als Raum: Zu Methoden und Inhalten der historischen Geographie des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes*, edited by K. Belke et. al, 153–73 (Vienna).
- Sanders, G. D. R. 2001. "Byzantine Polychrome Pottery." In *Mosaic: Festschrift for A. H. S. Megaw*, edited by J. Herrin, M. Mullett and C. Otten-Froux, *British School at Athens Studies* 8, 89–103 (London).
- Sanders, G. D. R. 2003. "Recent Developments in the Chronology of Byzantine Corinth." In *Corinth: The Centenary, 1896–1996*, edited by C. K. Williams II and N. Bookidis, 385–99 (Princeton).
- Spieser, J.-M. 1996. *Byzantinische Keramik aus der Stadtgrabung von Pergamon*. *Pergamenische Forschungen* 9 (Berlin).
- Vaag, L. E. 2005. "Phocaeen Red Slip Ware: Main and Secondary Productions." In *Trade Relation in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Late Hellenistic Period to Late Antiquity: The Ceramic Evidence*, edited by M. B. Briese and L. E. Vaag, 132–38 (Odense).
- Vroom, J. 2003. *After Antiquity: Ceramics and Society in the Aegean from the 7th to the 20th Century A.C.: A Case Study from Boeotia, Central Greece*. *Archaeological Studies Leiden University* 10 (Leiden).
- Waksman, S. Y. 2018. "Defining the Main 'Middle Byzantine Production' (MBP): Changing Perspectives in Byzantine Pottery Studies." In *XIth Congress AIECM3 on Medieval and*

- Modern Period Mediterranean Ceramics Proceedings (Antalya), Oct 2015*, edited by F. Yenişehirlioğlu, Vol. I, 397–408 (Ankara).
- Waksman, S. Y., and J.-M. Spieser. 1997. “Byzantine Ceramics Excavated in Pergamon: Archaeological Classification and Characterization of the Local and Imported Productions by PIXE and INAA Elemental Analysis, Mineralogy and Petrography.” In *Materials Analysis of Byzantine Pottery*, edited by H. Maguire, 105–33 (Washington, DC).
- Waksman, S. Y., and V. François. 2004–2005. “Vers une redéfinition typologique et analytique des céramiques byzantines du type Zeuxippus Ware.” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 128–29: 629–724.
- Waksman, S. Y., N. D. Kontogiannis, S. S. Skartsis, and G. Vaxevanis. 2014. “The Main ‘Middle Byzantine Production’ and Pottery Manufacture in Thebes and Chalkida.” *Annual of the British School at Athens* 109: 379–422.
- Zekos, N. 2003. “A Glazed Pottery Workshop in Thrace.” In *Actes de VIIe Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée, Thessaloniki, 11–16 October 1999*, edited by Ch. Bakirtzis, 456–58 (Athens).



## CHAPTER 36

---

# GLASS

---

ANASTASSIOS ANTONARAS

## GLASSWARE

---

THE study of Byzantine glass is a relatively new topic, still understudied with considerable potential for future research, both in analytical as well as in purely archaeological themes (Philippe 1970; Grabar 1971; Henderson and Mundell Mango 1995; Talbot and Whitehouse 2006; Antonaras 2010; Drauschke and Keller 2010; Keller, Price, and Jackson 2014; Francois and Spieser n.d.). The formation of typological charts and sequences as well as contextualization of the finds are much needed both for vessels and jewels, particularly beads. It is clear that throughout the Byzantine period, glass vessels were almost exclusively free-blown and only occasionally full- or dip-mold-blown. The vast majority are plain undecorated vessels made of naturally colored greenish transparent glass; dark blue and purple glass were only rarely employed. When present, decoration in the Early Byzantine period included engraving, application of threads or blobs of glass, use of glass of different colors, and gilding. During the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, applied threads and blobs occasionally decorated vessels, whereas cutting/faceting, enameling, and gilding were extremely rare and occurred only on special products. As to the distribution pattern of glassware, it is found in cities, monasteries, villages, and remote military posts throughout the empire, attesting to decentralized local production(s) and an extensive trading network.

### Glass in Early Byzantine Times

The invention of glass blowing was a technological revolution that took place around the early first century BCE somewhere along the Levantine coast. This led glass vessels, which had until then been a precious commodity, to experience a gradual fall in prices by the mid-first century CE, making possible their use among the wider social strata of the Eastern Mediterranean. By the first century, possession of glass vessels, usually

tablewares, *unguentaria*, or plain transportation vessels, had become common, and this remained the case until the end of the seventh century. During the Early Byzantine period (fourth–seventh centuries), primary glass production, that is, making glass from raw materials, was conducted exclusively in large workshops situated on the Levantine and the Egyptian coasts, where tons of glass was produced during each firing. Masses of raw glass were distributed to distant centers throughout the empire and beyond. Glass working and secondary glass workshops with local distribution were active in practically every town, mostly centrally located though occasionally outside city walls. These workshops processed imported raw glass and at the same time recycled glass fragments and, very much like pottery workshops, met local needs for everyday utilitarian objects that were mostly plain, or occasionally with simple decoration (for ceramic parallels, see Papanikola-Bakirtzi chapter, this volume). Extensive distribution to remote areas was restricted to luxurious vessels, which required highly specialized craftsmanship for their production and decoration. Such vessels included the *diatreta*, the *fondi d'oro*, and the *ampullae*, small lentoid and bigger prismatic vials, designed for the transportation of myrrh or holy water from the major Syro-Palestinian pilgrimage centers to the pilgrims' homelands (Antonaras 2012a, 3–39; Antonaras 2016, 22–25).

Glass vessels met both secular and religious needs, and dozens of distinct forms have been preserved (Figure 36.1/Color Plate 15B) (Antonaras 2009a; Antonaras 2010; Antonaras 2017; Antonaras 2019). Glassware served first and foremost as tableware for the middle and upper classes, as it was relatively cheap and easy to obtain.

Drinking vessels, beakers, and bowls were the commonest shapes, largely plain though occasionally displaying engraved or applied decoration. Dishes and trays for the serving and consumption of food in larger or smaller quantities seem to have been less



FIGURE 36.1 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 15B). Glass vessels, Thessaloniki, third–fifth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture.

frequently made. Vessels for holding and serving liquids, basically wine, were produced in many forms. Unguents and cosmetics were almost exclusively transported in, preserved in, and dispensed from glass vessels. These were usually small, simple vessels; such items were very widespread. More rarely they were elaborate, like the head-shaped mold-blown vessels or kohl tubes with multiple compartments. In addition, glass was used for the production of lighting devices on a large scale for the first time in this early period. Such devices were often drinking vessels or vessels that developed from them, with small handles added around the rim so that they could be suspended. They are found in quite a wide variety of shapes, meeting different lighting needs and representing different forms of lamps, either freestanding or independently suspended. A less common usage of glass was the creation of large cylindrical or prismatic vessels designed for transportation of goods. While these are extremely rare among archaeological finds, probably due to large-scale recycling, they must have been relatively widespread, as they are even mentioned in historical sources. Constant use of glass is also traced in medicine. Vessels for preserving medicaments, bleeding cups, mortars, and pestles are often mentioned in written sources but no firmly dated archaeological finds are attested to from this period. In addition, glass weights were quite widely distributed during the late fifth and sixth centuries.

## Glass in the Middle Byzantine Period

Excavation finds indicate that the number of glass vessels diminished after the seventh century, possibly due to the Arab conquest of the Syro-Palestine region (where raw glass was produced) and the ensuing general commercial and economic turmoil. It would seem that only a very few forms of glass vessels for everyday use continued to be produced. The meager archeological finds are supplemented by written sources: despite the small number of finds at Byzantine sites, glass vessels must have been present, at least for specific uses, and/or among specific, wealthier strata of the population. The gift of seventeen *hyelia*, possibly lamps, presented to Hugo, King of Italy (r. 926–948) by the Byzantine Romanos Lekapenos (r. 920–944) indicates that a special production line of high-quality objects existed, intended for the imperial milieu and use by other high-ranking officials. Other simpler vessels were also produced and intended for less elite circumstances, like the plain vessels found in large quantities in an early ninth-century glass workshop excavated in the center of Thessaloniki. Furthermore, Ioannes Kameniates' work on the Capture of Thessaloniki by the Arabs in 904 mentions the availability of glass vessels in the city's market. Finds from the capital dated to this period are very sparse and coincide with stemmed goblets and hemispherical and spindle-shaped unguentaria, forms occasionally depicted in contemporary wall paintings, too (Antonaras 2010; Antonaras 2016, 49).

Glass lamps are the sole type of ordinary utilitarian vessels that were relatively widespread in this period. These forms included stemmed lamps, three-handled wide

hemispherical bowls, stemmed goblets, and larger globular ones with a narrow mouth and flat handles around the body. Drinking vessels are quite rare; alongside the omnipresent stemmed beakers, truncated conical beakers also used as lamps occur as well.

Gilded and/or painted cylindrical vessels represent a group of glassware widely but very thinly distributed (Ristovska 2009; Antonaras 2010). They present a specialized production encompassing a short, very limited time span, possibly for the transport of a particular substance. They have been traced in Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Montenegro, Italy, Belarus, Armenia, and elsewhere. The precise use of these luxuriously decorated vessels is unknown, though some might have been used as tableware and others as flasks. They were only made from the end of the twelfth century through the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The only exception is presented by the famous bowl from the Treasury of San Marco, which is generally dated to the tenth–eleventh century. The “silver stain” technique in which these are decorated appears to be a medieval invention completely different from the Late Roman technique involving the use of gold foil. These vessels prove the descriptions of the monk Theophilus to be accurate at least insofar as decorative motives used by Byzantines during the early twelfth century, but not regarding the actual techniques used for decoration.

The ninth–tenth century Byzantine shipwreck of Mljet off the Croatian coast proves that Byzantine demand for glass vessels was at least partly met by products coming from the Arab caliphates and transported as far west as the Adriatic Sea. Vessels of Islamic origin were also traced in Kotor, Montenegro, dated around the twelfth century. The shipwreck of Serçe Limanı, dating to ca. 1025 CE, offers clear evidence of the scale of glass imports from the Islamic world, yielding three tons of raw glass and broken Islamic vessels. Certainly, the finds from this wreck do not prove that a corresponding number of Byzantine vessels were produced. The glass cargo might have been intended for production of mosaic tesserae, or window panes. But in any case, it is obvious that glass working was a major professional activity in Byzantium, since workshops needed such large quantities of raw material to even partially meet the needs of their society for glass products.

Regarding other uses of glass, the written sources partly compensate for the scarcity of archaeological finds. So, for instance, we read that glass vials were used for the transportation of holy water and/or myrrh from large pilgrimage centers like the complex of St. Nicholas at Myra. The use of glass implements and vessels in medicine attested to in documents includes vessels for preserving raw materials and substances, urinals, bleeding cups, alembics, and breast-shaped baby-feeders. Vessels of different sizes meant for long-term preservation of agricultural products are also mentioned in texts. Finally, scribes were using glass bottles for keeping larger quantities of ready-for-use ink in their desks. In conclusion, while in written sources all uses of glass vessels known from the early period are mentioned, excavations firmly dated to the Middle Byzantine period, which are in any case limited, have yielded very few glass finds, primarily drinking vessels, lamps, and flasks. Tableware is attested to mostly in the cargo of wrecks containing Islamic material.

## Glass in the Late Byzantine Period

While glass vessels reappear in significant numbers in archaeological strata dating after the thirteenth century—at least in large urban and religious centers where the economy was once again flourishing—Late Byzantine glass vessels remain essentially unknown and imported vessels regularly met the relevant needs of Byzantines (Figure 36.2).

Extensive trade with Western cities favored the import and spread of Italian bottles and beakers to numerous urban centers in the empire and the Balkan kingdoms. Islamic vessels were also widely distributed, mainly flasks and unguentaria, and occasionally enameled mosque lamps, which were repurposed in both Christian and secular contexts. The majority of the vessels preserved from this era belong to various forms of tablewares, mainly of Western origin, and they are occasionally depicted in wall paintings as well. Often these pieces were also used for liturgical purposes: beakers were used as lamps at graves or in churches, and bottles as containers for holy water or myrrh.

Glass lamps are another fairly common find appearing in several sizes and shapes, from sizable mosque lamps to simple bowls for insertion into polycandela. Apart from a few large, enameled Islamic lamps, and smaller plain imitations of these (possibly Venetian), more diminutive bowl-shaped lamps with tiny handles seem to be more widely used. Stemmed lamps meant to be used in polycandela are not so numerous; probably, small independently hung lamps now played the major role in the lighting of churches and secular buildings, with lamps suspended in metal fixtures employed to a lesser degree.



**FIGURE 36.2.** Venetian and Islamic glass vessels, Thessaloniki, thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture.



Specific vessels, Islamic, Western, and some produced locally in a particular size or shape, were used for holding small amounts of medicinal or liturgical liquids. Islamic spindle-shaped, lentoid and ring-shaped vials were widely distributed forms that were later replicated in Western workshops. In addition, some Byzantine production existed as well, though this was probably limited. Scribes are depicted using relatively small, handle-less or single-handled vessels (quite similar to some archaeological finds) to hold readymade ink. Finally, we know that physicians and alchemists continued using glass urinals, bleeding cups, alembics, and vessels for preserving substances, raw materials, or ready-to-use medicaments. A manuscript of Nikolaos Myrepsos representing what was probably a thirteenth-century Athenian medical practice illustrates a physician examining a patient's urine through a glass *matula*. The entire staff of the physician's practice is shown performing their duties. On the walls are depicted different forms of glass vessels used for the preservation of solid and (mainly) liquid medicinal substances, for which Myrepsos had become famous and about which he had written an entire book, the *Dynameron*, a pharmacology with 2,656 recipes.

All the aforementioned finds represent what is known of glass vessels in the Late Byzantine world. Although the general picture and its true dimensions are still not clear due to large-scale recycling, continuous habitation in the same places, and the salvage character of the majority of Byzantine excavations, it is evident that Byzantine regions were flooded with Venetian and, to a lesser degree, Islamic imports. Changes in economic conditions in the cities and society as a whole led to the mass reintroduction of glass vessels in the Byzantines' everyday life. Tablewares, unguentaria, lamps, and other vessels dedicated to special needs, such as in the liturgy, in medicine and alchemy, and in manuscript copying, are the commonest among them. These needs were met mostly by imports. Some modest local production can be traced among the extant material, which has a clear utilitarian character. It is evident that for the first time since Late Antiquity, glass vessels were amply present in Byzantine regions.

## GLASS JEWELRY

---

Jewelry is another form of artistic creativity in which glass was used. During the Early Christian period, glass was employed for the production of entire jewels, or in the embellishment of metal objects. The majority present colorful pendants, amulets, large or small beads, often plain though occasionally decorated, and spacers (Antonaras 2019, 184-225). Seemingly black, mainly plain, but occasionally ribbed or with stamped motives, glass bracelets appear after the third century, most probably in imitation of jet prototypes that were very much in fashion during the fourth century. Although very few glass rings occur, glass gems, almost exclusively plain, are often found in both cheaper and more costly jewelry (Spaer 2001; Antonaras 2019, 226-28). Furthermore, enameling is sporadically traced among archaeological finds of this period. Finally, larger glass gems were produced for use either in architectural decoration or more often in the

embellishment of precious, gemmed objects such as book bindings, crosses, or furniture with such insets (Antonaras 2016, 24).

In the Middle Byzantine period, glass bracelets become very widespread. They appear with many different cross-sections, including circular, semicircular, band-like, and plano-convex (Figure 36.3). The vast majority appear black, though they are in fact made of dark green, dark blue, or dark purple glass. Sometimes they are twisted, and/or decorated with fine threads of glass of a different, contrasting color. Painted examples are relatively rare but geographically equally widespread (Gill 2002; Ristovska 2009; Antonaras 2006; Antonaras 2019, 229–50).

Middle Byzantine glass rings and gems are rare. Beads, at least plain globular monochrome ones, were in continuous use, either in strands as necklaces, or independently as additional embellishment of metal jewelry such as earrings. In addition, larger, drop-shaped pendants also occur throughout the Balkans (Antonaras 2019, 186–89). Enamel is occasionally present in the form of cloisonné (see Bosselmann-Ruickbie chapter, this volume). There are preserved examples of rings and earrings embellished with enamel, and a fashion involving fine, miniature mosaic-like enameling is also noted. The most exquisite preserved examples of cloisonné enameling—works from the same tenth-century workshop—are a pair of gold armbands and a necklace decorated with small enameled plaques bearing palmettes, rosettes, and a bird rendered in several different chromatic variations of opaque white, red, turquoise, and blue glass (Antonaras 2012b).



FIGURE 36.3. Glass bracelets, Retina, tenth–twelfth centuries. © Museum of Byzantine Culture.

In the Late Byzantine period, glass continued to be used for the production of different types of beads and pendants, still not precisely dated. In the thirteenth century, glass medallions were fashioned in Venice and possibly in Byzantium, evidently continuing a Byzantine fashion as attested by their motives. In addition, gems of various colors are used for the embellishment of metal objects and, as the contemporary writer Nicephorus Gregoras notes, even the impoverished Byzantine emperor substituted glass gems for the jewels in his crown.

## MOSAICS—*OPERA SECTILIA*

---

However, the majority of glass production was for wall mosaic decoration in public and private, secular and religious buildings (Entwistle and James 2013; see James chapter, this volume). The wall mosaics of the late fourth-century Rotunda in Thessaloniki may serve as a representative example. We estimate that seventeen tons of glass were used for the decoration of this one edifice, equal to approximately 170,000 tableware vessels weighing between 70 and 120 grams each. Mosaic ornamentation is attested to in secular and ecclesiastical buildings throughout the Byzantine era. The continuation of glass mosaic production in the Middle Byzantine period is attested to in several pieces of evidence. Apart from preserved monuments like the eighth-century St. Sophia in Thessaloniki, where Iconoclastic mosaics from the 790s coexist with compositions from the ninth and eleventh or twelfth centuries, there is the reference that at some point after 965, Nikephoros Phokas sent to the caliph al-Haquim II (r. 961–975) at his request a group of mosaicists together with loads of tesserae for the decoration of the latter's mosque in Cordoba. The execution of major iconographical programs in different cities such as the Chora Monastery in Constantinople and the Holy Apostles church in Thessaloniki attests to the continuation of such production in the Late Byzantine era. In addition, Late Byzantine portable mosaic icons, larger ones with the usual size tesserae and smaller ones with miniature tesserae, are another form of artistry employing glass for their construction. Glass tesserae were cut from cake-like masses of the appropriate thickness reportedly up to 30 cm wide. Parts and intact examples have been unearthed at several sites, all of them opaque in striking colors including red, green, yellow, and blue. Only small fragments of what is believed to be gold glass tesserae cakes or tiles have been found, probably due to their costliness.

Gold glass tiles, square, triangular, and band-shaped, represent another kind of glass mural decoration. At least two qualities or production techniques have been identified. Probably all of them date to the sixth–seventh centuries. Such tiles could be totally covered by a gold foil occasionally bearing pressed motives; in other cases, simple cross-shaped motives or elaborate geometric patterns were formed by cutting the foil. Some of these have been loosely dated to the Middle Byzantine period (Gorin-Rosen 2015). The only on-site surviving examples are preserved in Agios Dimitrios in Thessaloniki, where gold-coated plaques are set in the center of marble wall revetments, and properly

cut pieces of turquoise glass are used creatively to render three-dimensional perspective in the folds of the *tribelon* curtains depicted. The Roman tradition of glass *opera sectilia* continued with large compositions in the third to fifth centuries, with pagan and Christian themes known from sites in Italy, Greece, Palestine, and Egypt. Later, especially during the sixth and tenth centuries, geometrically cut glass tiles in striking colors were used as insets in marble architectural elements emulating gem-studded objects (Antonaras 2009b).

## WINDOW PANES

---

Window glass was widely used as early as the first century CE in sumptuous buildings, both private and public. By the fourth century, windows in all important buildings were glazed and the technique that essentially monopolized window glass production was that of cylinder blowing. A large bubble of glass was blown and left to assume an ovular shape through the force of gravity, after which it was cut vertically and flattened, thus forming a very large surface of relatively flat glass, which was then cut down into rectangular pieces that fitted the gridded openings of the large Early Byzantine *transennae*. This technique continued in use until the end of the seventh century. Changes in architectural forms led to the alteration of windows, which became far smaller and fewer than in the Early Christian period, covered by marble or stucco frames in which small pieces of colored glass were inserted. From the end of the seventh century onwards, circular pieces of glass, so-called crown glass, known in the West at the time as *oculi*, were mainly used. Crown glass *oculi* were blown and shaped like dishes or plates; the rim was folded inward and flattened, as was the body, which was used as the diaphragm of stucco, marble, or even wooden *transennae*. Two very special sets of stained window glass shouldered with lead came are preserved from Constantinople at the Chora and Pantokratōr Monasteries, both of which are unusual, as they seem to have been either cast or made from sheets of cylinder glass. Dating to the early twelfth century, these illustrate floral and geometrical patterns and standing figures. Chemically different from Western glass, both appear to be genuine Byzantine products (Ousterhout 1999).

## REFERENCES

---

- Antonaras, A. 2006. "Gyalina mezobyzantina brachiolia: Symbolē se themata diadosēs, paragōgēs, typologias kai chrēsēs." *DChAE*, Series 4, 27: 423–34.
- Antonaras, A. 2009a. *Rōmaikē kai palaiochristianikē yalourgia 1os ai. p. Ch.–6os ai. m. Ch.: paragōgē kai proionta: ta angeia apo tē Thessalonikē kai tēn periochē tēs* (Athens). Reprinted in English slightly altered as Antonaras, A., *Glassware and Glassworking in Thessaloniki: 1st Century BC – 6th Century AD*. *Archaeopress Roman Archaeology* 27 (Oxford 2017).

- Antonaras, A. 2009b. "Gold-Glass Tiles from St. Demetrios' Wall Decoration." In *18th International Congress of the International Association for the History of Glass, Thessaloniki, 2009*, edited by A. Antonaras and D. Ignatiadou, 301–6 (Thessaloniki 2012).
- Antonaras, A. 2010. "Early Christian and Byzantine Glass Vessels: Forms and Uses." In *Byzanz—das Römerreich im Mittelalter*, edited by F. Daim and J. Drauschke, Welt der Ideen, Welt der Dinge, 383–430 (Mainz).
- Antonaras, A. 2012a. *Fire and Sand: Ancient Glass in the Collection of the Princeton University Art Museum* (New Haven).
- Antonaras, A. 2012b. "Middle and Late Byzantine Jewellery from Thessaloniki and Its Region." In *Byzantine Small Finds in Archaeological Contexts*, edited by B. Böhlendorf-Arslan and A. Ricci, 117–26 (Istanbul).
- Antonaras, A. 2016. *Arts, Crafts and Trades in Ancient and Byzantine Thessaloniki: Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence* (Mainz).
- Antonaras, A. 2019. *Ἐ τεχνῆ του γυαλιου. Erga apo tē syllogē tou Mouseiou Vyzantinou Politismou // The Art of Glass. Works from the collection of the Museum of Byzantine Culture.* (Thessaloniki).
- Drauschke, J., and D. Keller. 2010. *Glass in Byzantium: Production, Usage, Analyses*, international workshop organized by the Byzantine Archaeology Mainz, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (Mainz).
- Entwistle, C., and L. James. 2013. *New Light on Old Glass: Recent Research on Byzantine Mosaics and Glass* (London).
- Francois, V., and Spieser, J.-M. n.d. "Pottery and Glass in Byzantium." *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh Through the Fifteenth Century*, vol. I. <http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00752076>.
- Gill, M. A. V. 2002. *Amorium Reports, 1. Finds I, the Glass (1987–1997)* (Oxford).
- Gorin-Rosen, Y. 2015. "Byzantine Gold Glass from Excavations in the Holy Land." *Journal of Glass Studies* 57: 97–119.
- Grabar, A. 1971. "La verrerie d'art byzantine au Moyen Age." *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot* 57: 89–127.
- Henderson, J., and M. Mundell-Mango. 1995. "Glass at Medieval Constantinople: Preliminary Scientific Evidence." In *Constantinople and Its Hinterland*, edited by C. Mango and G. Dagron, 333–56 (Cambridge).
- Keller, D. J. Price, and C. M. Jackson. 2014. *Neighbours and Successors of Rome: Traditions of Glass Production and Use in Europe and the Middle East in the Later 1st Millennium A.D.* (Oxford).
- Ousterhout, R. 1999. *Master Builders of Byzantium* (Princeton).
- Philippe, J. 1970. *Le Monde Byzantin dans l'histoire de la verrerie: Ve–XVIe siècle* (Bologna).
- Ristovska, N. 2009. "Distribution Patterns of Middle Byzantine Painted Glass." In *Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th Centuries: The Archaeology of Local, Regional, and International Exchange*, edited by M. Mundell Mango, 199–220 (Farnham).
- Spaer, M. 2001. *Ancient Glass in the Israel Museum: Beads and Other Small Objects* (Jerusalem).
- Talbot, A.-M., and D. Whitehouse 2006. "Byzantine Glass." *DOP* 59: 141–230.

## CHAPTER 37

---

# JEWELRY AND ENAMELS

---

ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUICKBIE

THIS chapter considers body jewelry and a technique frequently employed for its decoration as well as for adornments used in ecclesiastical and courtly spheres: enamel.

### BYZANTINE JEWELRY

---

#### Introduction

Byzantine jewelry comprises primarily decorative body jewelry, such as necklaces, earrings, finger rings, and bracelets (usually not crowns, diadems and other insignia, belt buckles, fibulae, and weapons' decorations). Religious *encolpia* (Greek *kolpos* = chest) and pectoral crosses along with “magical” amulets (sometimes difficult to distinguish) can have much in common with jewelry. A silver ring from Corinth, for example, inscribed as “phylacterion,” was worn as both a decorative and a protective item (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, no. 142; see also Pitarakis and Tuerk-Stonberg chapters, this volume). Some jewelry also served as perfume or reliquary containers (e. g., Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, no. 74, figs. 128, 177).

Jewelry in Byzantium was worn primarily but not exclusively by women: some rings bear male (rarely female) names, often with a military rank or office such as the ring of the *parakoimomenos* Basileios (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, no. 139). Men are sometimes represented with single earrings, probably indicating their eastern provenance, for example, the prophet Daniel (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 131–33).

Most jewelry was made from precious and nonferrous metals (gold, silver, bronze, or other copper alloys) (Figure 37.1). Iron jewelry has hardly survived due to its corrodibility, but must have been common everyday jewelry; so was glass, used as ersatz gemstones, and for bracelets, rings and beads (see Antonaras chapter, this volume, esp.



FIGURE 37.1. Bronze ring with pentagram found in Corinth, Greece. Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. MF 6830. Photo: A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie.

Figure 36.3). Gold jewelry, especially, could be embellished with gemstones, pearls, and, from the tenth century on, enamel (see “Enamel” section in this chapter).

Jewelry was cast or made from sheet metal, often chased and engraved. Non-precious metals and silver were sometimes enhanced by gilding, silvering, or tinning. Granulation, filigree, and beaded wire served as decoration. Wire made with draw-plates appears from the Middle Byzantine period. Many techniques were similar in Western and Islamic goldsmithing (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 75–91; Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2014). A Greek treatise on goldsmithing (1478) contains fifty-six recipes for techniques, such as enamel and niello (Wolters 2006; Bosselmann-Ruickbie and Greiff 2018).

## State of Research

Byzantine jewelry has not been studied systematically with regard to all periods. Early and Middle Byzantine jewelry has been given the most attention (Manière-Lévêque 1997; Yeroulanou 1999; Deppert-Lippitz 2000; Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011; Petrina 2016; Baldini Lippolis 2017; Schulze-Dörrlamm ed. 2020). Late Byzantine jewelry has only recently come into focus (Spier 2013; Bosselmann-Ruickbie, ed. 2019). Jewelry of all periods is presented in the conference volume *Intelligible Beauty* (Entwistle and Adams 2010).

The study of mobile objects is generally difficult due to their often unknown provenance; jewelry (especially made of precious metals) from secure archaeological contexts is rare. Misdated and forged jewelry have blurred the picture (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 59–66). Most pieces came to museums and collections via the art market, with collectors' interest often focused on the material value (exceptions include the Christian Schmidt Collection, Munich; see Schmidt chapter, this volume). Everyday jewelry of cheaper materials (e.g., Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2001), often found in excavations, is seldom published systematically.

The study of contemporary depictions is essential: primarily these show generic “types,” but representations of donors can reflect contemporary tastes and wearing practices (see, e.g., Schmidt chapter in Bosselmann-Ruickbie, ed. 2019). Written sources, such as testaments (Parani chapter in Entwistle and Adams 2010, 186–92), are as a rule imprecise regarding the appearance and style of jewelry. However, they can provide information on its use, function, and appreciation as inheritance, diplomatic gift, or investment (see, for example, Anna Komnene's eleventh-century report on melting down jewelry of the imperial family to finance military campaigns), although the contemporary monetary value of jewelry cannot be estimated accurately (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 31–34, 71–74).

Scientific analysis of Byzantine jewelry is not the rule. An exception is the tenth-century Preslav Treasure from Bulgaria (Greiff et. al 2018), offering a solid basis for future research. While analyses of metal (often repeatedly melted down), enamels, or gemstones cannot determine a precise age or provenance, such studies allow comparisons with other objects, such as coins (Oddy and La Niece 1983) and forgeries.

## Early Byzantine Jewelry

Late Roman and Early Byzantine jewelry, especially from the sixth and seventh centuries, has survived in larger numbers than later jewelry (this is paralleled by silver treasures composed largely of dishes, vessels, and coins; see Klein chapter, this volume). Important treasures including jewelry from the fourth to seventh century come from Thetford and Hoxne (England), Rome (Piazza della Consolazione), Mytilene (Greece), Mersin (Cilicia), and Assiut (Egypt) (Johns 1996; Deppert-Lippitz 2000; Stolz 2006; Touratsoglou 2008; Williams 2014).

Included in these hoards are finger rings, earrings (often lunula-shaped), bracelets, and necklaces (Baldini Lippolis 2017), frequently golden and often adorned with pearls and a colorful array of glass and gemstone beads and inlays. Popular stones were emeralds, sapphires, and amethysts, which were mined in Egypt, India, and Sri Lanka. The combination of pearls with emeralds and “hyacinths” (blueish or reddish stones, perhaps rubies) was restricted to imperial usage in the *Codex Justinianus*, and one such probably imperial piece is the gold collar with sapphires, emeralds and pearls from the so-called Assiut Treasure (sixth–seventh century) (Stolz 2006). Neck jewelry also



includes loop-in-loop chains with pendants, interconnected *opus interrasile* discs (see description later in this section) or gemstones on wire.

Narrative scenes on Byzantine jewelry are rare, an exception being the *dextrarum iunctio* (Christ joining the right hands of a couple in marriage) on pendants, rings, and belts (Stolz 2009; Walker 2010). Other motifs include monograms, the Chi-Rho, peacocks, doves and fishes, as recommended for Christian rings by Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. 215, *Paedagogus* III, 11.59). Unique pieces include a gold ring decorated with a miniature oil lamp (Petrina 2016, 134–37). The use of coins for jewelry providing a *terminus post quem*, is well-attested for the Early Byzantine period exclusively (Bruhn 1993; Deppert-Lippitz 1996).

A distinct feature of Early Byzantine jewelry is the *opus interrasile* or *diatrita* technique (Figure 37.2, see Schulze-Dörrlamm ed. 2020, 48–56). Thin sheet gold was cut open with



FIGURE 37.2. *Opus interassile* chain with cross pendant, sixth–seventh century. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, inv. no. O.37809. © Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz. Photo: V. Iserhardt/RGZM.

a chisel to create ornaments or birds grouped around *kantheroi* with a lace-like effect (similar to contemporary trends in architectural decoration, such as the capitals of Hagia Sophia). Sometimes this technique was combined with pearls and gemstones (Yeroulanou 1999; Tóth chapter in Entwistle and Adams 2010, 1–12).

A crucial question in research on jewelry is that of production centers and the role of the capital for steering fashions and trends. In the Early Byzantine period, an “interregional” style can be made out, but although the capital Constantinople seems to have been central, regional/provincial workshops also must have existed, for example, in Egypt, the Near East, and Ravenna (Stolz chapter in Entwistle and Adams 2010, 33–39; Petrina 2016).

## Middle Byzantine Jewelry

A decisive change in jewelry production with different styles, techniques, and materials developed after Iconoclasm. *Opus interrasile* was discontinued and enamel introduced. Most surviving gold jewelry dates from the tenth century, including the “imperial group,” decorated with enamels, gemstones, and pearls (Bosselmann-Ruickbie, forthcoming [a]). The first datable hoard is the Preslav Treasure (Bulgaria) with over 180 pieces, comprising a 227g enameled gold necklace with pendants, five enameled diadem plaques, earrings, and metal applique (Figure 37.3). The jewelry was probably a wedding gift for the Bulgarian tsar Peter (r. 927–969) and the Byzantine princess Maria-Irene in 927. Two smaller tenth-century hoards from Thessaloniki and Crete, also surely from an imperial context, have comparable jewelry, including Byzantine enamel earrings bearing Kufic inscriptions; these can best be explained as diplomatic gifts to one of the tenth-century Arab emirs of Crete (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2008).

After the tenth century, the number of datable finds decreases. Most common are rings, often decorated with inscriptions or monograms, some with identifiable owners among the elites, such as the former empress Maria Botaneiatēna (around 1100) or admiral Stryphnos (late twelfth century; Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, no. 135, 141). Toward the end of the Middle Byzantine period, a jewelry hoard from Thessaloniki (buried 1224–1246) reflects Western influence, suggesting an owner among the Latin rulers of Thessaloniki (see Bosselmann-Ruickbie chapter in Entwistle and Adams 2010, 219–33).

Depictions of jewelry increase in the Komnenian period, but rarely show realistic subjects except for donor portraits (e. g., Anna Radene, Hagioi Anargyroi, Kastoria; Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, no. D14). Decoration on this jewelry is primarily ornamental (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 136–41) with few narrative scenes, such as the Ascension of Alexander the Great. The written word has superseded iconographic themes; for example, rings bearing a male and a female name seem to have replaced the *dextrarum iunctio* on marriage rings. While depictions of Christ, Mary, or saints are rare, jewelry, including that made of bronze, is more often decorated with animals, birds (eagles), or fabulous creatures. Jewelry made from bronze and sometimes silver differs from gold jewelry in the occasional use of magical symbols, inscriptions, and depictions



FIGURE 37.3. Necklace from the Preslav Treasure Bulgaria, tenth century. Museum “Veliki Preslav,” inv. no. 3381/1. © Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz. Photo: S. Steidl/ RGZM.

(pentagram, star, womb demon), sometimes combined with Christian iconography and inscriptions (Figure 37.1; see Pitarakis and Tuerk-Stonberg chapters, this volume).

## Late Byzantine Jewelry

The most important published jewelry finds from the Late Byzantine period come from Thessaloniki, Mystras, and Chalcis. The conference volume *Recent Research on Late Byzantine Goldsmiths’ Works* displays jewelry from these findspots along with Serbia (archers’ rings) and discusses depictions of jewelry in Cretan murals (Bosselmann-Ruickbie, ed. 2019, chapters by Antonaras, Steinert, Kontogiannis and Orfanou, Bikić, and Schmidt).

Late Byzantine rings, such as a group ascribed to Constantinople, were often inscribed with words and symbols such as imperial monograms, offices, psalms, or epigrams by Manuel Philes (Spier 2013). A large corpus of rings from Bulgaria (Totev 2010) shows iconography inspired by Western heraldry, with eagles, lions rampant, and monograms. The fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Chalcis Hoard from Venetian-ruled Euboea, Greece (Kontogiannis and Orfanou chapter in Bosselmann-Ruickbie, ed. 2019), comprises Venetian and Byzantine jewelry and—together with the aforementioned

hoard buried in thirteenth-century Thessaloniki—illuminates the post-Crusade situation in the eastern Mediterranean, ruled by Western aristocracy.

## Future Directions

While research has often neglected small objects, jewelry in particular can reveal much information, for example, about the cultural background of the wearers and exchange between cultures. In order to understand the characteristics of Byzantine jewelry, more comparative studies are needed on the cultural transfer of jewelry and goldsmiths' works with Byzantium's Christian and Islamic neighbors, such as Serbs, Macedonians, Great Moravians, Seljuks, Mamluks, and Mongols. In general, more excavated material needs to be published and studied in a systematic and interdisciplinary manner, in combination with scientific analyses.

# BYZANTINE ENAMEL

---

## Introduction

The art of enameling was already known in antiquity. In the fifth-sixth centuries, single enamel birds were a short-lived and limited fashion (s. fig. 37.2, Schulze-Dörrlamm ed. 2020, 50-51). From the ninth century, cloisonné enamel decorated imperial and ecclesiastical luxury objects and diplomatic gifts. Usually round, square, rectangular, or with arched tops, enamel embellished book covers, icon frames, crosses, reliquaries, liturgical vessels, crowns, and jewelry; mostly these enamels featured Christian iconography. Many are detached from their former context, which we know from sources could be iconostases, vessels, horse trappings, and saddles (Hetherington 2008, II). Few surviving objects attest to secular use (e.g., a silver cup found in Ukraine, Woodfin 2016, and two medallions with falconers on horseback on San Marco's Pala d'Oro, Woodfin 2017, nt. 1).

Over a thousand enamels, often used in series, are preserved today, but these probably represent a mere 1–2 percent of the original production (Hetherington 2008, I, 213). Only some can be dated reliably, most to the tenth to mid-eleventh centuries, some to the twelfth and even fewer to the thirteenth and fourteenth. Many enamel works were brought to the West after 1204, such as those in the Treasury of San Marco in Venice (Hahnloser 1971; Buckton 1984) and the Limburg Staurotheke, brought to Germany by a crusader in 1207 (Figure 37.4/Color Plate 16B) (Heuser and Kloft 2009). Other enamels were exported before 1204, such as the enamels (from a diadem?) on the cover of the Pericopes of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II in Munich (1007-1012; Buckton 2000).

Other such exports include enameled reliquaries in Siena, liquidated by Empress Helena in 1356/7 (Hetherington 2008, VII), and the medallions on the



FIGURE 37.4 (ALSO COLOR PLATE 16). Detail, Limburg Staurotheke, tenth century, Limburg/Germany, Diocesan Museum. © Diocesan Museum Limburg, Germany. Photo: Michael Benecke.

probably fourteenth-century frame of the icon in Freising (Figure 37.5) (Shashina and Sterligova 2018).

Today, Byzantine enamels are distributed over collections worldwide, for example, the British Museum (Buckton 1994), the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Ross 1965/2006), and the Metropolitan Museum (*Glory of Byzantium*).



FIGURE 37.5. Enamel medallion with St. Kosmas on the frame of the Byzantine icon, thirteenth–fourteenth century, in Freising/Germany, Diocesan Museum. © Diocesan Museum Freiburg, Germany.

## Techniques

Enamels are made of glass melted on a metal base, colored primarily with metal oxides. The earliest and most common technique is *émail cloisonné* (*Zellenschmelz*), covering the entire metal base, the colors separated by *cloisons* (flat metal wires). Gold—apart from its color and value—was preferred for its high melting point of 1064° C, but due to decreased access, gilt silver prevailed in the Late Byzantine period. In the tenth century, *émail enfoncé* (*Senkschmelz*, “sunken enamel,” or *émail mixte*) was invented: cloisonné enamel was set into a recessed area of the metal base, the motif appearing on a gold enamelled background. Early enamels are mostly translucent, but white and yellow were usually opaque. An emerald green enamelled background was characteristic for the ninth to tenth centuries. Those of the twelfth century and later are often more opaque with duller colors, but the lack of brilliancy can also be due to the state of preservation (see Freising Icon enamels that suffered from later restoration; Figure 37.5). *Émail en*

*ronde bosse*, on a concave surface, is found exclusively on the eleventh-century icon of the Archangel Michael, San Marco (*Byzantium*, 330-1453, no. 58) and on the twelfth-/thirteenth-century Demetrios relief, Berlin (Figure 37.6) (Buckton 1998); on the latter, enamels also appear like gemstones in settings.

Enamel on copper is usually dated to the twelfth century, but might have been introduced earlier. *Émail champlevé* (*Grubenschmelz*) was regularly used for inscriptions, but, on a larger scale, it is only found on a few objects showing the influence of Limoges enamels from France. Gothic translucent enamel (*émail en basse taille*), invented in thirteenth-century Italy, appeared in Byzantium after the Crusades (Bosselmann-Ruickbie, forthcoming [b]). In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Byzantine enamels were rarer and still in traditional cloisonné technique with more opaque colors. Despite the often-quoted decline of Byzantine economics, there was also much technical and stylistic innovation. Examples are the enameling in the grooves of a metal relief (Mandylion Icon Genoa, probably early fourteenth century; Dell'Acqua 2013),



FIGURE 37.6. Gold relief icon with St. Demetrios, twelfth–thirteenth century, Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum. Photo: Karen Bartsch.

pseudo-enamel made of a resin-based material (Bessarion Cross, Venice, 1347–1354), and enamel imitated in the painted leather miter of Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre, thirteenth century. (For reverse painting on glass in relation to enamel see Woodfin 2017.)

## Dated Enamels

Only a small group of enamels can be dated, for different reasons (Wessel 1967; Hetherington 2008, I, 191–96; Hetherington 2008, II); hence, the common historical method of fitting the remaining corpus into this schema based on stylistic grounds cannot provide solid evidence, especially for the later period. The first dated cloisonné enamel is the ninth-century Fieschi-Morgan Staurotheke (*Byzantium*, 330–1453, no. 52) that was earlier believed to be pre-Iconoclastic. Based on the iconography of the *Anastasis* scene, however, it must date from after the Council of Nicaea in 787, and as a cross reliquary with Greek inscriptions, it must have been made in Constantinople. Comparisons with earlier Carolingian enamel speak for Western influence (through craftsmen?) on the earliest Byzantine enamel works. A stylistically similar “votive crown” in San Marco can only have been made under Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912), providing another fixed point for dating (*Byzantium*, 330–1453, no. 64). The Preslav Treasure from Bulgaria, including enameled jewelry (see “Jewelry” section in this chapter), must have been a diplomatic gift from Byzantium, probably made ca. 927 for a wedding of a Byzantine princess, based on circumstantial evidence. The diadem plaques would in this case be the first datable Senkschmelz enamels known. Contemporary jewelry from Thessaloniki and Crete, including a pair of bracelets with forty enamels, demonstrates the importance of enamels in imperial jewelry (Bosselmann-Ruickbie, forthcoming [a]). By far the most impressive work is the large Limburg Staurotheke (Figure 37.4/Color Plate 16B) that, according to its inscription on the cross and the container, was made under the emperors Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos and Romanos II (joint reign 945–959) and the “Proedros Basileios” (d. ca. 985/986). Romanos II is often held accountable for the two chalices in San Marco naming an emperor Romanos, due to stylistic similarities with the staurotheke (Buckton 1984, nos. 10, 11). Definitely made before 1007–1014 were the aforementioned enamels on Henry II’s *Pericopes* (1007–1012). Three Byzantine empresses are depicted on enamels: Zoe (1028–1050, San Marco; Hahnloser 1971, no. 100), Irene (1081–1118, Pala d’Oro; Buckton and Osborne 2000), and Maria Botaneiatēna (ca. 1050, died after 1105, Khachuli Triptych; Buckton 2001, 216–17; Eastmond 2016), providing secure dates. This is also the case for the “Monochmachos Crown,” showing Zoe, her sister Theodora, and Constantine IX Monomachos, which dates the five large enamel plaques to 1042–1052. The authenticity of the enamels was subject to much debate (Buckton 2006, 31–33), but their color scheme and general design is congruent with authentic enamels. Enamels on the lower part of the Holy Crown of Hungary in Budapest are dated through the representations of the emperor Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071–1078) and the Hungarian king Géza I (r. 1074–1077; Buckton 2002). The Esztergom Staurotheke has been connected to an historical document, suggesting



a date of 1190 for the arrival of the central cross reliquary in Hungary (Prinzing 2013). The enameled gold ring of Admiral Stryphnos also dates to the late twelfth century (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, no. 141). A date before 1204 is ascertained for the huge enamels with church feasts on the famous Pala d'Oro in San Marco, Venice, which are thought to have come from the Pantokratōr Monastery, Constantinople.

Evidence for Late Byzantine enamel is scarce, and it has only recently become a focus of research with new evaluations of two ensembles hitherto thought to be securely dated. The ten medallions on the Freising Icon's frame (Figure 37.5) were dated to the mid-thirteenth century due to the inscriptions mentioning Manuel Dishypatos, but a later namesake was recently suggested, so the frame might date to the fourteenth century. Thus, the enamels would either be later than thought or re-used. Eighty-seven enamels on a fifteenth-century miter in Stockholm were dated to the time of the Latin Occupation in Constantinople (1204–1261) due to their Latin inscriptions, but must rather be attributed to Sicily around 1300 (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2020).

The icon of St. John the Theologian (Patmos) was dated to around 1300 for stylistic reasons, and so were the medallions on its frame. Also surely Palaiologan is the book cover in the Marciana Library, Venice, due to the style of the relief scenes (Shashina and Sterligova 2018, figs. 6, 7), while the frame of the Esztergom Staurotheke with enameled ornaments can be dated to the mid-fourteenth century (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2018, 89–90). Other enamels testify to Western influence after the Crusades: a censer in the Benaki Museum is comparable to thirteenth-century Limoges enamels. The chalice and paten of Despot Thomas Preljubović (Duke of Epiros, 1366–1384) with translucent enamels (in the monastery of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos) display an interesting combination of Byzantine and Western elements, leading to suggestions for its production in Venice, Dalmatia, or Thessaloniki (Kempkens chapter in Bosselmann-Ruickbie, ed. 2019, 136–38; see Klein chapter, this volume, Figure 31.6/Color Plate 11B).

## State and Problems of Research

Byzantine enamels caught scholars' attention in the nineteenth century (esp. Kondakov 1892). In 1911, M. Botkin published his collection of 162 "Byzantine" enamels, almost all forgeries from around 1900 (Buckton 2001; Buckton 2006), followed by M. Rosenberg's three volumes on Byzantine enamels in 1921–1922. The first (and last) monograph was published by K. Wessel in 1967. Important for research are also the 1965 Dumbarton Oaks Collection catalog by M. Ross (reprinted with addendum: Ross 1965/2006), the catalogs of San Marco's treasury (Hahnloser 1965/1971; Buckton 1984) and the Metropolitan Museum exhibition *Glory of Byzantium*. Many studies by D. Buckton and P. Hetherington (Hetherington 2008) dealt with context, style, techniques, forgeries/copies, and East-West relations; Pentcheva (2006) considered aesthetics.

One research problem is tracing provenance due to the lack of archaeological evidence for enamel workshops in Byzantium. A large corpus of similar enamels,

sometimes difficult to discriminate, was made in contemporary Georgia (Chusividaze 1984; Dshawachischwili and Abramischwili 1986; Kotsis 2012; see Skhirtladze chapter, this volume). Enamels from Kievan Rus' and Russia also drew from Byzantine prototypes (see, e.g., the discussion of the “Dagmar Cross,” Copenhagen, supposedly from the Danish Queen’s grave [d. 1212], referred to as originating in either Kievan Rus' or Constantinople [*Glory of Byzantium*, no. 313; Ciggaar 2000]). Western enamels of the ninth–tenth century can sometimes be difficult to differentiate from Byzantine objects. Examples are the supposedly Byzantine enamels in the Essen Treasury, Germany, that are Ottonian (Bosselmann-Ruickbie and Stolz 2009) and the enameled Carolingian jug in St. Maurice d’Agaune, whose enamels have been labeled Byzantine, Georgian, or Ottonian, with suggested dates from the sixth to the twelfth century (Antoine-König 2014, no. 11). Islamic cloisonné enamels, especially Fatimid, are a later development, beginning with the late tenth century, based on Byzantine prototypes. Byzantine earrings from Crete with Arabic inscriptions were probably Byzantine diplomatic gifts to an Arab ruler of tenth-century Crete—perhaps inspiring the development of Fatimid enamel (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2008). The “Artukid Bowl” in Innsbruck, a secular copper plate, bears Arabic and Persian inscriptions; it was often thought to be Byzantine, but is now attributed to a Greek workshop in Seljuk Anatolia before 1130 (Asutay-Effenberger 2009). An enameled silver cup with dancers recently found in Ukraine, attributed to a Constantinopolitan workshop, reopens the question of production centers in general (Constantinople or “provinces”?; see Woodfin 2016).

Another major problem is inauthentic and doubtful enamels (Buckton 2006), such as a pair of earrings in Berlin with an emperor John, identified as John I Tzimikes (r. 969–976), the enamels of which are modern (Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 62–66). The authenticity of other prominent enamel works were questioned, such as the aforementioned “Monomachos Crown.” The large group of “Botkins” made in St. Petersburg around 1900 in the environment of the Fabergé workshops were often taken as authentic. Scientific analyses can identify modern forgeries by components, such as chrome and uranium, only used in the modern period; however, they cannot determine age or provenance of an enamel. Such analyses are still rather the exception than the norm (but see Byzantine enamels, Louvre: Biron 2016; Preslav Treasure: Greiff et. al 2018; “Botkins”: Helfenstein et. al 2012).

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

---

Dating and attribution of enamels remain difficult due to the lack of securely dated objects from excavations. Our understanding is based on a timeline with few fixed points, and since new finds are extremely rare, the focus of future research should be on scientific analyses and comparison of enamel composition to find out more about this hallmark technique of Byzantine craftsmanship. Tracing crosscurrents of influence across cultures will further our understanding of Byzantine enamels.

## REFERENCES

- Antoine-König, E. 2014. *Le trésor de l'abbaye de Saint-Maurice d'Agaune* (Paris). Exhibition catalogue.
- Asutay-Effenberger, N. 2009. "Überlegung zur Datierung und Lokalisierung der Innsbrucker Artukiden-Schale." *Byzantion* 79: 37–47.
- Baldini Lippolis, I. 2017. "Jewelry." In *The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology*, edited by P. C. Finney, 742–47 (Grand Rapids, MI).
- Biron, I. 2015. *Émaux sur métal du IXe au XIXe siècle: Histoire, technique et matériaux* (Paris).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2008. "Byzantinisch, Islamisch oder 'Internationaler Stil'? Email- und Körbchenohrringe aus dem östlichen Mittelmeerraum." In *Grenzgänge im östlichen Mittelmeerraum: Byzanz und die islamische Welt vom 9. bis 13. Jahrhundert*, edited by U. Koenen and M. Müller-Wiener, 83–119 (Wiesbaden).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2011. *Byzantinischer Schmuck des 9. bis frühen 13. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen zum metallenen dekorativen Körperschmuck der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit anhand datierter Funde aus Bulgarien und Griechenland* (Wiesbaden).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2014. "Das Verhältnis der 'Schedula diversarum artium' des Theophilus Presbyter zu byzantinischen Goldschmiedearbeiten: Grenzüberschreitende Wissensverbreitung im Mittelalter?" In *Zwischen Kunsthandwerk und Kunst: Die "Schedula diversarum artium,"* edited by A. Speer, 333–68 (Berlin and Boston).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2018. "Contact between Byzantium and the West from the 9th to the 15th Century and Their Reflections in Goldsmiths' Works and Enamels." In *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge: Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen*. vol. 1, edited by F. Daim, D. Heher, and C. Rapp, 73–104 (Mainz).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A., ed. 2019. *New Research on Late Byzantine Goldsmiths' Works: Proceedings of the Conference held in Mainz, 29–30 October 2015* (Mainz).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. 2020. "Byzantinisierende Emails auf einer Mitra des 15. Jahrhunderts aus Linköping (heute in Stockholm): Lateinerzeitliches Konstantinopel oder Sizilien um 1300?" In *Contextus: Festschrift für Sabine Schrenk zu ihrem 65. Geburtstag*, edited by S. de Blaauw, E. Enss, and P. Linscheid, 489–504 (Münster).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. (forthcoming, a). "The Preslav Treasure and Byzantine Imperial Jewellery and Enamels of the 9th and 10th Centuries." In *The Preslav Treasure: Proceedings of the Conference in the Louvre, Paris 2018*, edited by A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie and F. Daim (Mainz).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A. (forthcoming, b). "New Light on Byzantine Enamels of the Thirteenth Century." In *Πάντα ῥεῖ – Byzantium in Change: Art, Archaeology and Society in the Thirteenth Century*, edited by J. Albani and I. Christoforaki (Turnhout).
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A., and S. Greiff. 2018. "Rosinen in der Messingerstellung und andere Kuriositäten byzantinischer Goldschmiederezepte: Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zu einem byzantinischen Goldschmiedetraktat." *Antike Welt* 4: 27–30.
- Bosselmann-Ruickbie, A., and Y. Stolz. 2009. "Ottonischer Nimbus oder byzantinischer Juwelenkragen?: Zur Goldenen Madonna und zehn trapezoiden Emails auf dem Nagelreliquiar und dem Theophanukreuz im Essener Domschatz." *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte* 6: 77–99.
- Bruhn, A.-J. 1993. *Coins and Costumes in Late Antiquity* (Washington, DC).
- Buckton, D. 1984. *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (Milan). Exhibition catalogue.

- Buckton, D. 1994. *Byzantium: treasures of Byzantine art and culture from British collections* (London). Exhibition catalogue.
- Buckton, D. 1998. "The Gold Icon of St. Demetrios." In *Der Welfenschatz und sein Umkreis*, edited by J. Ehlers and D. Kötzsche, 277–86 (Mainz).
- Buckton, D. 2000. "Byzantine Enamels in Bavaria." *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte* 2: 93–106.
- Buckton, D. 2001. "Stalin and Georgian Enamels." In *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1999*, edited by A. Eastmond, 211–18 (Aldershot).
- Buckton, D. 2002. "The Holy Crown in the History of Enamelling." In *Acta Historiae Artium Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 43: 14–22.
- Buckton, D. 2006. "Byzantine Enamels in the Twentieth Century." In *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, edited by E. Jeffreys, 25–37 (Cambridge).
- Buckton, D., and J. Osborne 2000. "The Enamel of Doge Ordelafo Falier on the Pala d'Oro in Venice." *Gesta* 39: 43–49.
- Byzantium, 330-1453.*
- Chusividadze, L. 1984. *Enamels at Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* (Tbilisi).
- Ciggaar, K. 2000. "Denmark and Byzantium from 1184 to 1212. Queen Dagmar's Cross, a Chrysobull of Alexius III and an 'Ultramarine' Connection." *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 13: 118–43.
- Dell'Aqua, F. 2013. "Borders of Experimentalism: Glass in the Frame of the Genoa Mandylion." In *New Light on Old Glass: Recent Research on Byzantine Glass and Mosaics*, edited by C. Entwistle and L. James, 234–41 (London).
- Deppert-Lippitz, B. 1996. "Late Roman Splendor: Jewelry from the Age of Constantine." *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art*, 1: 30–71.
- Deppert-Lippitz, B. 2000. "Late Roman and Early Byzantine Jewelry." In *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, edited by K. Reynolds Brown, D. Kidd, and C. T. Little, 58–77 (New York).
- Dshawachischwili, A. and G. Abramischwili 1986. *Goldschmiedekunst und Toreutik in den Museen Georgiens* (Leningrad).
- Eastmond, A. 2016. "Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Icon of Xaxuli and Enamel Diplomacy between Byzantium and Georgia." In *The Medieval South Caucasus*, edited by I. Foletti, and E. Thunø, 88–105 (Prague).
- Entwistle C., and N. Adams, eds. 2011. *Intelligible Beauty: Recent Research on Byzantine Jewellery* (London).
- Glory of Byzantium.*
- Greiff, S., et. al. 2018. "Le trésor de Preslav en Bulgarie: Un projet de recherche centré sur un trésor médiéval." In *Le trésor de Preslav: Reflet d'un âge d'or du Moyen Age bulgare*, edited by J. Durand, 45–49 (Paris).
- Hahnloser, H. R. 1965/1971. *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, 2 vols. La Pala d'Oro; Il tesoro et il museo. (Florence).
- Helfenstein, E., et. al. 2012. "Technical Examination of Enamels from the Botkin Collection." *Studies in Conservation* 57, S1: 147–56.
- Hetherington, P. 2008. *Enamels, Crowns, Relics and Icons: Studies on Luxury Arts in Byzantium*. Variorum (Aldershot).
- Heuser, A., and M. Kloft, eds. 2009. *Im Zeichen des Kreuzes: Die Limburger Staurothek und ihre Geschichte* (Regensburg).

- Johns, C. 1996. *The Jewellery of Roman Britain* (London).
- Klein, H. A., et. al. 2017. *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Constantinopolio e Venezia* (Venice).
- Kondakov, N. 1892. *Geschichte und Denkmäler des byzantinischen Emails (Sammlung A. W. Swenigorodskoi)*; French edition: *Histoire et monuments des émaux byzantins. (Collection de Mr. A. W. Swenigorodskoi)* (Frankfurt am Main).
- Kotsis, K. 2012. "Mothers of the Empire: Empresses Zoe and Theodora on a Byzantine Medallion Cycle." *Medieval Feminist Forum* 48, 1: 5–96.
- Manière-Lévêque, A. M. 1997. "L'évolution des bijoux 'aristocratiques' féminins à travers les trésors proto-byzantins d'orfèvrerie." *Révue Archéologique* 1: 79–106.
- Oddy, W. A., and S. La Niece. 1986. "Byzantine Gold Coins and Jewellery: A Study of Gold Contents." *Gold Bulletin* 19, 1: 19–27.
- Papanikola-Bakirtzi, D., ed. 2001. *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (Athens). Exhibition catalogue.
- Pentcheva, B. V. 2010. *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA).
- Petrina, Y. 2016. "Die frühbyzantinische Goldschmiedekunst: Ihre überregionale und regionale Bedeutung." Habilitation thesis, unpublished, Munich.
- Prinzing, G. 2013. "The Esztergom Reliquary Revisited: Wann, weshalb und wem hat Kaiser Isaak II. Angelos die Staurothek als Geschenk übersandt?" In *ΦΙΛΟΠΙATION: Spaziergang im kaiserlichen Garten*, edited by N. Asutay-Effenberger and F. Daim, 247–56 (Mainz).
- Ross, M. C. 1965/2006. *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, vol. 2: *Jewelry, Enamels, and Art of the Migration Period*, with addendum by S. Boyd and S. Zwirn (Washington, DC).
- Schulze-Dörrlamm, M. ed. 2020. *Byzantinische Goldschmiedearbeiten im Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum* (Mainz).
- Shashina, O., and I. Sterligova. 2018. "Die Medaillons auf dem Metallbeslag des Freisinger Lukasbildes und die Geschichte byzantinischer Cloisonné-Emailarbeiten." In *Das Freisinger Lukasbild: Eine byzantinische Ikone und ihre tausendjährige Geschichte*, edited by A. Bosselmann-Ruickbie and C. Roll, 101–8 (Paderborn).
- Spier, J. 2013. *Late Byzantine Rings, 1204–1453* (Wiesbaden).
- Stolz, Y. 2006. "Eine kaiserliche Insignie?: Der Juwelenkragen aus dem sog. Schatzfund von Assuit." *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 53: 521–603.
- Stolz, Y. 2009. "Kaiserlich oder bürgerlich?: Ein Anhänger in München, frühbyzantinische Diademe und anderer Hochzeitsschmuck." *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte* 6: 115–35.
- Totev, K. 2010. *Golden Signet Rings from the Time of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom 1185–1396* (Veliko Tarnovo).
- Touratsoglou, I., and E. Chalkia. 2008. *The Kratigos, Mytilene Treasure: Coins and Valuables of the 7th Century AD* (Athens).
- Walker, A. 2010. "Numismatic and Metrological Parallels for the Iconography of Early Byzantine Marriage Jewelry: The Question of the Crowned Bride." *Mélanges Cécile Morisson, Travaux et mémoires* 16: 1–14.
- Wessel, K. 1967. *Byzantine Enamels from the Fifth to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. I. R. Gibbons (Greenwich, CT).
- Williams, E. D. 2014. "'Into the Hands of a Well-known Antiquary of Cairo': The Assiut Treasure and the Making of an Archaeological Hoard." *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 21, 2: 251–72.

- Wolters, J. 2006. "On the Noble and Illustrious Art of the Goldsmith: An 11th-Century Text." *Historical Metallurgy* 40, 1: 68–88.
- Woodfin, W. T. 2016. "Within a Budding Grove: Dancers, Gardens, and the Enamel Cup from the Chungul Kurgan." *AB* 98, 2: 151–80.
- Woodfin, W. 2017. "The Mock Turtle's Tears. Ersatz Enamel and the Hierarchy of Media in Pseudo-Kodinos." *BMGS* 42: 55–80.
- Yeroulanou, A. 1999. *Diatrita: Gold Pierced-work Jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th Century* (Athens).



## CHAPTER 38

---

# TEXTILE MEDIA

---

WARREN T. WOODFIN

## INTRODUCTION

---

OUR picture of the textile arts in Byzantium is strangely fragmented. Byzantine textiles, both in the way they have been collected by institutions and in the ways they are published, have tended to be treated almost as three separate subjects rather than a single corpus. These consist of the so-called Coptic textiles of Late Antiquity; the woven luxury silks that are closely identified with the imperial court of Constantinople; and the embroideries created from the twelfth century onward for the use of the Orthodox Church. These three categories are less separate from one another than they might at first seem. Woven silks appear among the finds from Late Antique Egypt, while tapestry weave, which is characteristic of most of the “Coptic” textiles, recurs in a unique Middle Byzantine example, the spectacular tapestry of an imperial rider preserved at Bamberg. Finally, the gold embroidery that is familiar from church vestments of the Palaiologan era was also used in both Early Byzantine and Middle Byzantine contexts. But beyond the temporal overlap of favored techniques, what makes these categories of textiles equally “Byzantine” is their use for the self-expression of court, aristocracy, and church, and the shifts within Byzantium’s textile production tell us much about the priorities of the periods in which these objects were made.

The circumstances under which textiles were preserved are, of course, a major factor in their reception. To the extent that their original contexts can be reconstructed, the so-called Coptic textiles come primarily from burials, but they can be taken as our best point of access into the role of textiles and dress in the daily life of Early Byzantium. Very little comparable material survives from later periods—largely thanks to Byzantium’s loss of territory in the desert regions best suited to the preservation of textiles—and what does survive is from the elite of court and church. Surviving textiles from the Middle Byzantine period are almost exclusively luxury silks, many of which must have arrived at their eventual repositories in Western Europe as diplomatic gifts. Finally, the gold-embroidered hangings and vestments surviving from the Late Byzantine period



may be presumed to be exceptional in their decoration, for inventories from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries give the sense that the majority of textiles in liturgical use were simpler, intended for day-to-day use, and thus eventually wore out.

## LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY BYZANTINE TEXTILES: HOUSE AND MARKETPLACE

---

Historically, the corpus of Late Roman and Early Byzantine textiles have been designated as “Coptic,” which is to say, related to the ethnically indigenous, non-Chalcedonian Christian population of Egypt. “Coptic textiles” is a misnomer that has tended to exert a distorting effect on our understanding of these pieces. The Egyptian origin of the majority of surviving pieces from this period has far more to do with the region’s arid climate than with any discernable regional character of the garments or their motifs, although clothing preferences certainly did vary from region to region (Jørgensen 1993; Maguire 1999, 153–54; Thomas 2007). It is abundantly clear that their production and consumption was hardly limited to the Copts, and in any case, recognizably Christian iconography appears on only a minority of pieces (e.g., see Maguire 1990; Fluck 2008). Syrian sites such as Dura Europos and Palmyra have yielded textile finds comparable to those from Egypt; moreover, one wall hanging found in Egypt bears a woven inscription naming Heracleia in Asia Minor as its place of manufacture (Pfister and Bellinger 1945; Stauffer 1999, 719; Schmidt-Colinet, Stauffer, and al-As’ad 2000).

The textiles from these early sites in Egypt and, to a lesser extent, from Syria and the southern Levant are primarily of linen and wool, with a scattering of pieces in the far more costly silk (Martiniani-Reber 1991; Stauffer 1995; Lorquin 2003). Linen had the advantages both of being producible from locally grown flax and of being comfortable in hot weather. Because linen is relatively resistant to most natural dyestuffs, multicolored garments were achieved by integrating dyed woolen threads in tapestry weave, sometimes as appliqués, but often woven integrally with the garment on the loom onto portions of the warp left bare of linen wefts (Maguire 1999, 15–16; Wild 2003, 143–44). The typical Early Byzantine tunic was woven to shape on a horizontal loom, likely in a household workshop. The ornament, whether integral or applied, was generally executed in tapestry weave, occasionally with looped pile. Applied bands of silk twill, such as those found at Achmim/Panopolis, were evidently woven on a more sophisticated loom with a built-in mechanism for the pattern repeat (Thomas 2012).

The combination of linen and wool was also used for curtains, frequently featuring trellis patterns or scattered, small-scale motifs in wool decorating the fine linen ground (Maguire, Maguire, and Duncan-Flowers 1989, 45–47, 48; Stephenson 2014). In a few cases, tapestry-woven hangings actually depict curtains hung in doorways, as we might imagine them being deployed in early Byzantine times (Kondoleon 2016, 88). Alongside depictions of curtains in textile and in mosaic, surviving bronze curtain hooks of



**FIGURE 38.1.** Sleeve band with Bacchic dancers, a swimmer, and two ducks. Egypt, fourth–seventh century. Natural linen and blue and black wool, tapestry weave. 7.5 × 21 cm. Gift of the Estate of Rose Choron, Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College, New York.

sixth-century date in monuments such as Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and the Basilica Eufrosiana in Poreč attest to the original presence of curtains now long since vanished (Terry and Maguire 2007, 60, figs. 204, 250; Stephenson 2014; see also Brooks chapter, this volume). For imperial contexts, where curtains continued to serve important ceremonial functions right through the end of the Byzantine period, we are largely reliant upon textual evidence (Maguire 2009).

The nature of collecting has tended to obscure the origin of the majority of surviving Early Byzantine textiles as fragments of dress and furnishings (Thomas 2016). The aesthetics of the art market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dictated that the majority of these ornaments—whether round, square, or star-shaped—be cut out from the surrounding linen ground and presented as a woven “picture” rather than as an element of dress (Figure 38.1). Thus isolated and framed on a rigid surface, the essentially mobile character of textile was negated, even if this framing was done in the service of an appreciation of Byzantine aesthetics as a perceived forerunner of the styles of the early twentieth-century avant-garde (Thomas 2009; Nelson 2015).

## WOVEN SILKS OF THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD

---

Evidence from Egypt also shows that silks were being woven already in the fourth century, although sericulture was not introduced until the reign of Justinian. Multiple geographic centers of silk-weaving are likely for this period, although there is no firm basis for the localization of the “Alexandrian Group” of silks proposed by Otto von Falke in 1913 (Muthesius 1997, 65–79). There are notorious difficulties in distinguishing on technical or stylistic grounds between Byzantine production—whether from Egypt, Syria,

or Constantinople itself—and Sassanian Persian or Islamic silk weaving. In technique, the Byzantine and Middle Eastern silks are identical, both being woven predominantly in weft-faced compound twill, or samite. Only when the motifs refer to specifically Byzantine iconography, such as chariot racing, can we be at all confident about their provenance (Walker 2012, 25–37). The group of silks associated with Panopolis/Akhmim in Upper Egypt, published in 1891 by Robert Forrer, present a relatively coherent group, featuring motifs such as equestrian male warriors or Amazons in white against a dark blue or purple ground. The Greek-inscribed pieces with  $\text{I}\Omega\text{C}\text{H}\Phi$  and  $\text{ZAXA}\text{P}\text{I}\text{O}\text{Y}$  share the same stock of Persian-derived motifs with others inscribed in Arabic, suggesting that the workshop or workshops that produced them continued to function after the Arab conquest of Egypt (Forrer 1891; Thomas 2007; Thomas 2012).

The earliest silk textile we can assign securely to an imperial atelier in Constantinople is a fragment from the cathedral of Liège, bearing the Greek monogram of the emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641), whose reign saw both victory over Sassanian Persia and the loss of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria to the armies of Islam (Borkopp 2000, 27–28). Other silks of this period are harder to date and place, although attempts have been made on the basis of parallels in other media (Otavsky 1998). The famous red-ground silks with the Annunciation and Nativity in the Vatican have been variously attributed to Alexandria, Syria, or Constantinople and dated anywhere from the sixth to the ninth century. Stylistically similar, but with an ostensibly secular motif, are the numerous fragments with the pattern of a man strangling a lion (often dubbed “Samson silks”) (*Byzantium and Islam*, 152–54, cat. nos. 101, 102 A, B). The typically Persian pattern of motifs framed within a pearled or foliate medallion became widespread in the eighth and ninth centuries, even being imitated—with respect both to design and technique—by weavers in Tang Dynasty China (Kuhn 2012, 39–47). The spectacular and eclectic textile finds from the site of Moshchevaia Balka in the north Caucasus well illustrate Byzantium’s silk trade with Central Asia and points further east (Jerusalimskaia 1996 and Jerusalimskaia 2012).

After Byzantium’s geographic and economic contraction in the face of the Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries, the period of its fiscal and political recovery in the ninth and tenth centuries corresponds to the production of the luxury silk textiles for which the empire became so well known. This period also gives us our most important textual evidence for silk production and trade in Byzantium, both from surviving pieces with imperial inscriptions and from the famous manual of economic regulations, the *Book of the Eparch* (Koder 1991; Martiniani-Reber 2015, 95–96, 239, 264). Increased imperial control over both the technologies of silk dyeing and weaving and the dissemination of the finished products insured the treasury its share of the economic gain from the sale of silk. Furthermore, these regulations effectively reserved silks of the highest caliber for the use of the court—both its internal ceremonial and outward diplomacy. One of the characteristics of silks produced in the tenth and eleventh centuries is the impressive scale of their patterns (Figure 38.2) (Woodfin 2013). Some silks of clearly imperial provenance, such as the famed eagle silk from Auxerre or the lion silk in Cologne (the latter bearing inscriptions naming the emperors Constantine [VIII] and Basil [II]), dispense with the older, Sassanian-influenced convention of



**FIGURE 38.2.** Woven silk fragment with part of a scene of a griffin attacking an elephant. Byzantium, tenth–eleventh century. Silk in west-faced compound twill weave (samite). 28 cm high, 23 cm wide. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

medallion borders, and simply allow the large-scale animal motifs to float free. Others, such as the elephant silk from the shrine of Charlemagne in Aachen, retain the device of the medallion frame but enlarge it to monumental proportions (in this case, some 80 cm wide) (von Wilkens 1991, 52–54). Weaving an accurate circle on such a scale—not to mention the figural motif contained within it—required considerable technical mastery. In addition to seeing the increasing scale and complexity of the motifs, the period

corresponds to a technical shift from single main warps to the paired main warps characteristic of “classic” Byzantine silks. The function of these main warps is to act as a sort of fulcrum for the ready exchange of colored wefts, but since they do not interweave with the weft threads (a function left to the binding warp), they remain invisible within the thickness of the finished fabric.

Around the year 1000, Byzantine taste began favoring silks with monochrome patterns rather than multiple colors of weft. Many of these are woven in the so-called incised twill technique. This technique uses the exact same samite structure as the polychrome silks—paired main warps that lie within the thickness of the fabric and single binding warps that interweave with the weft—but instead of the main warps acting as pivots to exchange colors of weft thread, they create the impression of incised lines at the points where the wefts from two different shuttles are exchanged (Schorta 2001, 21–25). This technique seems to have been used both by Byzantine weavers and by their neighbors in the Islamic world, and for both figural and non-figural patterns. These silks may also represent further refinement in the automation of the weave repeat: a small strip of incised twill in the Diözesanmuseum of Speyer reveals that the weavers shifted from an ogival pattern of palmettes to a pattern of griffins and birds without removing the warps from the loom (Schorta 2001, 108–10, 190). This abrupt shift from one pattern to another of wholly different design and scale is evidence for the use of a true drawloom with a pattern harness, that is to say, a horizontal loom with technology that allowed precise repetition of the design in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. The open question is whether this technology already existed in Byzantium in previous centuries, or whether the Speyer fragment is roughly contemporaneous with the introduction of the full-fledged drawloom into the Byzantine silk-weaving industry. Jon Thompson and Hero Granger-Taylor have argued that it was in fact the preference for such monochrome patterns that led to the introduction of this type of loom in Byzantium around the year 1000, and they propose that earlier Byzantine silks were woven on a rather simpler, vertical loom without such a sophisticated patterning technology (Riboud and Vial 1981; Thompson and Granger-Taylor 1995). The majority of scholars, however, accept a much earlier date for the introduction of the drawloom in Byzantium, and certainly there is ample documentation of its use in China prior to the establishment of a Byzantine silk industry (Muthesius 1997, 19–26; Ball 2009; Kuhn 2012, 55–62). Although documentary evidence is lacking, it is possible that Chinese loom designs were imported along with silkworms and the knowledge necessary for their successful culture.

The desire for monochromatic designs may also have spurred the development of *proto-lampas* (a variant on the twill structure) and *lampas* (a combination of two independent binding systems). These techniques produce the pattern effect through a textural contrast on the fabric surface. Early examples are found among the famous set of vestments deposited in the grave of Pope Clement II (d. 1047) at Bamberg. These consist of monochrome silks in both “incised twill” and *proto-lampas*, at times displaying identical motifs repeated in both weaving techniques (Schorta 2001, 104–8). Comparison of the two side by side shows the greater legibility of the *proto-lampas* (Figure 38.3), with



**FIGURE 38.3.** Pontifical stockings of Pope Clement II. Byzantium or Near East, first half of eleventh century. Silk in proto-lampas weave. 58 cm high, 49.4 cm wide at top. Diözesanmuseum, Bamberg.

glossy motifs created by longer passes (“floats”) of the silk weft standing out against the less reflective background.

Three proto-lampas fragments of similar pattern were found the tomb of Edward the Confessor (d. 1066) in Westminster Abbey (Ciggaar 1982, 90; Crowfoot, Pritchard, and Staniland 2001, 86–87, fig. 59). Because both decorative motifs and weaving techniques were shared between Byzantium and its Islamic neighbors, it is notoriously difficult to localize production of pieces that are not securely attached to a known provenance. The blue chasuble from the Monastery of St. Peter in Salzburg, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is a case in point. From the point of view of textile structure and pattern, the incised twill resembles a Byzantine silk; only the presence of a Kufic inscription on the selvage, which may be read as bearing the name of the Marwanid emir Nasr al-Daula (r. 1010/11–1061), connects it to the region of Upper Mesopotamia rather than to Constantinople (von Lerber 1992; Blair 1997, 136–37).

From the end of the eleventh century, the Byzantine silk industry suffered a series of setbacks. In order to gain Venetian military support against Norman incursions into Greece, Alexios I Komnenos in 1082 granted to Venice the right to trade in Byzantine

ports without imposition of duty. Although the economic impact of this concession is debated, it is clear that the agreement vastly expanded Venice's role in the trade of textiles from Byzantium (Laiou 2002, 751). The trade advantages conferred on Venice and, slightly later, on Genoa and Pisa, helped the Italian cities establish economically viable silk industries of their own, which flourished especially after the sack of Constantinople by the armies of the Fourth Crusade. In 1147, the Normans resurgent under Roger II again attacked Greece, this time kidnapping silk workers from Thebes and Corinth. A twelfth-century letter of the Norman historian Hugo Falcandus lists—using mostly Greek terminology—an impressive array of types of silk textiles then being produced in the royal workshops of Norman Sicily (Jacoby 2004a, 65). Despite this, the underlying silk fabric for the most famous textile of Roger's reign, the so-called Coronation Mantle (dated by its embroidered inscription to 1133/4), is a typical Byzantine or Middle Eastern “incised twill” with a pattern of small palmettes (Schorta 2001, 142–44).

Given the importance of silk textiles to Byzantium's diplomatic and ceremonial life, the paucity of textual evidence for a Byzantine silk weaving industry after 1204 is striking. Evidence for the re-establishment of silk weaving workshops in Constantinople after the Fourth Crusade is scarce. While Nicaea produced woven silks from the thirteenth century up to its capture by the Ottomans in 1331 (Jacoby 2004b, 129–30), there is no evidence that it produced the kinds of elaborately patterned compound weaves for which Byzantium was famed in its earlier centuries. On the other hand, textual, artistic, and archaeological sources provide ample testimony that the Byzantines of the Palaiologan period imported patterned luxury silks from Italy and Spain (Martiniani-Reber 2000; Jacoby 2006, 33–35). The Byzantine court nonetheless continued to exploit the historic association between Constantinople and luxury textiles in its diplomatic practices (Hilsdale 2010, 2014). Gold embroidery, a medium that was already widely practiced in Byzantium during the twelfth century (if not earlier), provided a means to continue the association between the Byzantine court and rich gifts of silk.

## LATE BYZANTINE EMBROIDERIES

---

Just as the church treasuries of Western Europe are the source of much of our knowledge of Middle Byzantine silk weaving, so the sacristies of the Orthodox churches and monasteries of the Balkans and Eastern Europe preserve most of our surviving Byzantine embroideries. These are overwhelmingly ecclesiastical in nature, adorning veils and vestments for the Orthodox liturgy. A smattering of archaeological evidence demonstrates that the medium of gold embroidery was also used in the secular sphere. We are told as much by the fourteenth-century ceremonial manual of Pseudo-Kodinos (Parani 2007; Macrides, Munitiz, and Angelov 2013), but physical evidence of secular embroideries comes largely from outside the borders of the late empire. The early thirteenth-century burial of a nomadic leader at the Chungul Kurgan in south-eastern Ukraine contained an extensive array of gold- and pearl-embroidered textiles,

many of them likely imports from Byzantium (Woodfin, Rassamakin, and Holod 2010). Excavations at the church of St. Nicholas in Staničenje, now within the borders of Serbia, revealed remains of at least five silk bands embroidered with double-headed eagles, cranes, stags, and the name of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Alexander, which have also been attributed to a fourteenth-century Byzantine workshop (Popović et. al 2005; Nitić and Temerinski 2006). These archaeological textiles, along with a handful of examples preserved in treasuries—such as the so-called belt of the Serbian noble Branko, with its embroidered heraldic emblems—are rare examples of secular embroidery among the much larger body of liturgical pieces (*Faith and Power*, 310, cat. no. 185; Cvetković 2015).

Gold embroidery for liturgical textiles was already being practiced in the twelfth century, as witnessed by a handful of surviving pieces. The two embroidered *aëres* in the cathedral treasury of Halberstadt arrived there as loot from the Fourth Crusade, and the traces of the original purple silk on which they were embroidered makes their Constantinopolitan provenance clear (Meller, Mundt, and Schmuhl 2008, 282–84, cat. no. 81; Strohmaier 2017). To a certain extent, embroidery could be used to gloss over the decline of Byzantium's own textile industry. The embroidered *pallio* presented by Michael Palaiologos to Genoa on the eve of the reconquest of Constantinople was, evidently, one of a series of textile gifts pledged in connection with the Treaty of Nymphaion. Like the tapestry-woven silk found in Bamberg, the *pallio* displayed the image of the emperor at its center (Hilsdale 2010; Eastmond 2012; Hilsdale, 2014). The medium of embroidery, furthermore, allowed for greater iconographic scope. The scenes of the life and martyrdom of St. Lawrence, into which the image of Michael VIII Palaiologos was inserted, would have presented an enormous technical challenge were the design structurally integrated into the woven pattern of a silk textile rather than embroidered on its surface. The Genoa *pallio*'s skillfully executed gold embroidery and its presentation by the Byzantine emperor made it into an authentically Byzantine gift. By employing embroidery, the Palaiologoi were able to continue to exploit the traditional reputation of Byzantine textile gifts (Macrides 1980, 22–25). By this period, however, documentary evidence shows that Byzantium imported both silk fabrics and gold threads from Italy (Jacoby 2006, 26). Embroidery was an adaptable medium for the straitened economic circumstances of Byzantium in its last centuries, as it required little in the way of special equipment or technology, and the components could be purchased on an as-needed basis.

Despite these fiscal constraints, Byzantine workshops of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced some spectacular embroidered pieces, which stand out as artistic highlights of the era without respect to medium. The Thessaloniki *Epitaphios* is a case in point (Figure 38.4).

Sharon Gerstel and Anastassios Antonaras have recently reconstructed its history prior to its rediscovery by scholars in 1900 in the small Church of the Panagouda in Thessaloniki (Antonaras and Gerstel 2016). They suggest that the design of the *epitaphios* was made by a painter of the highest caliber, likely Manuel Panselinos, for either the Church of St. Panteleimon or for the Panagouda church itself. We have less evidence for the artists responsible for other prominent embroideries such as the Major





FIGURE 38.4. Thessaloniki *Epitaphios*. Byzantine, probably Thessaloniki, early fourteenth century. Embroidery in silver and silver-gilt wire, metal-wrapped thread, and silk on silk ground textile. 72 × 200 cm long. Museum of Byzantine Civilization, Thessaloniki.

*Sakkos* of Photios (dating a century or so later than the Thessaloniki piece), with its extensive program of figural scenes and portraits of the imperial family, but it is indisputably a work of imperial patronage (Woodfin 2012, 122–28, 215–20; Hilsdale 2014, 288–332). By means of spectacular vestments such as this, the Byzantine textile tradition was disseminated throughout the Orthodox world and perpetuated in a tradition that long outlasted the empire itself.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Recent years have seen textiles and their imagery re-enter the mainstream of art historical discourse, especially in the field of Byzantine art (Walker 2012; Hilsdale 2014). The study of Byzantine dress and the other practical uses to which textiles were put has received renewed attention (Parani 2003; Ball 2005; Parani 2007; Woodfin 2012). The scientific study of textile materials and structure, the province of textile scholars and conservators, has also continued to advance and become better integrated with art history (Andaloro 2006). Increasingly precise methods of dating by proteins in silk as well as by the more conventional radiocarbon dating hold the promise of establishing firmer benchmarks for a body of material that is often dated on subjective criteria of style and quality (de Moor, Schrenk, and Verheeken-Lammens 2006). Continued archaeological exploration and publication is essential for increasing our knowledge of Byzantine textiles, along with the publication or republication of the thousands of pieces in museums and church treasuries. A particular point on which archaeology may yet prove helpful is the reconstruction of Byzantine looms, an exercise that has hitherto relied heavily on comparative material from India and China. Indeed, much of what we believe we know about Byzantine looms is reconstructed from the evidence of the textiles themselves. The breaching of the formerly high barriers between textile

scholars and art historians is reflected in the recent resurgence of studies of Byzantine textiles in all periods. Further advances in our understanding of Byzantine textiles are likely to stem from greater collaboration among textile conservators, archaeologists, and art historians. Finally, one hopes that new scholarship will find productive ways of crossing the boundaries between the different periods and types of textile production in Byzantium in order to give us a more balanced and comprehensive picture of the history of Byzantine textiles.

## REFERENCES

- Andoloro, M., ed. 2006. *Nobiles Officinae: Perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo* (Catania).
- Antonaras, A., and S. E. J. Gerstel. 2016. "Between Heaven and Earth: Views of Byzantine Thessaloniki." In *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, edited by S. E. J. Gerstel, 85–109 (Turnhout).
- Ball, J. 2005. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting* (New York).
- Ball, J. 2009. "The Missing Link: Filling the Gap in the Evolution of Medieval Domestic Looms." In *ΑΝΑΘΗΜΑΤΑ ΕΟΡΤΙΑΚΑ: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. Mathews*, edited by J. Alchermes, H. Evans, and T. Thomas, 40–46 (Mainz am Rhein).
- Blair, S. 1997. "A Note on the Prayers Inscribed on Several Medieval Silk Textiles in the Abegg Foundation." In *Islamische Textilkunst des Mittelalters: Aktuelle Probleme*, edited by M. A. M. Salim et al. *Riggisberger Berichte* 5, 129–37 (Riggisberg).
- Borkopp, B. 2000. "Perlen, Rosetten und Blütenranken: Zur Ornamentik byzantinischer Seidengewebe." In *ΛΙΘΟΣΤΡΩΤΟΝ: Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte: Festschrift für Marcel Restle*, edited by B. Borkopp and T. Steppan, 25–37 (Stuttgart).
- Byzantium and Islam.*
- Ciggaar, K. 1982. "England and Byzantium on the Eve of the Norman Conquest (the Reign of Edward the Confessor)." *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5: 78–96.
- Crowfoot, E., F. Pritchard, and K. Staniland. 2001. *Textiles and Clothing c. 1150–c. 1450* (Rochester, NY).
- Cvetković, B. 2015. "Textiles and Their Usage in the Medieval Balkans: The Royal Context." In *Clothing the Sacred: Medieval Textiles as Fabric, Form, and Metaphor*, edited by M. Kapustka and W. Woodfin, 33–52 (Berlin and Emsdetten).
- de Moor, A., S. Schrenk, and C. Verhecken-Lammens. 2006. "New Research on the So-called Akhmim Silks." In *Textiles in Situ: Their Find Spots in Egypt and Neighbouring Countries in the First Millennium CE*, edited by S. Schrenk and N. Adams. *Riggisberger Berichte* 13, 89–92 (Riggisberg).
- Eastmond, A. 2012. "Diplomatic Gifts: Women and Art as Imperial Commodities in the 13th Century." In *Liquid & Multiple: Individuals and Identities in the Thirteenth-Century Aegean*, edited by G. Saint-Guillain and D. Stathakopoulos, 105–34 (Paris).
- Faith and Power.*
- Fluck, C. 2008. *Ein buntes Kleid für Josef: Biblische Geschichten auf ägyptischen Wirkereinen aus dem Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Berlin* (Berlin).

- Forrer, R. 1891. *Römische und byzantinische Seiden-Textilien aus dem Gräberfelde von Akhmim-Panopolis* (Strassburg).
- Hilsdale, C. 2010. "The Imperial Image at the End of Exile: The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)." *DOP* 64: 151–99.
- Hilsdale, C. 2014. *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge).
- Ierusalimskaia, A. A. 1996. *Die Gräber der Moščevaja Balka: Frühmittelalterliche Funde an der Nordkaukasischen Seidenstrasse* (Munich).
- Ierusalimskaia, A. A. 2012. *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na severokavkazskom shelkovom puti* (St. Petersburg).
- Jacoby, D. 2004a. "Seide und seidene Textilien im arabischen und normannischen Sizilien: Der wirtschaftliche Kontext." In *Nobiles Officinae: Die königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zur Zeit der Normannen und Staufer im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, edited by W. Seipel, 60–73 (Vienna).
- Jacoby, D. 2004b. "The Silk Trade of Late Byzantine Constantinople" In *50th Anniversary of the Istanbul University International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (XVth Century)*, 30–31 May 2003, edited by S. Atasoy, 129–44 (Istanbul).
- Jacoby, D. 2006. "Late Byzantium between the Mediterranean and Asia." *Faith and Power*, 20–41.
- Jørgensen, L. B. 1993. "The Late Roman Fort at Abū Sha'ār, Egypt: Textiles in Their Archaeological Context." In *Textiles in Situ: Their Find Spots in Egypt and Neighbouring Countries in the First Millennium CE*, edited by S. Schrenk and N. Adams. Riggisberger Berichte 13, 161–73 (Riggisberg).
- Koder, J. 1991. *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen* (Vienna).
- Kondoleon, C. 2016. "Late Antique Textiles at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Expanded Vistas." In *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity*, edited by T. Thomas, 86–95 (New York).
- Kuhn, D. 2012. "Reading the Magnificence of Ancient and Medieval Chinese Silks." In *Chinese Silks*, edited by D. Kuhn, 1–63 (New Haven).
- Laiou, A. 2002. "Exchange and Trade, Seventh–Twelfth Centuries." In *The Economic History of Byzantium*, edited by A. Laiou, Vol. 2, 697–770 (Washington, DC).
- Lorquin, A. 2003. "Le costume dans l'antiquité tardive d'après les vestiges textiles coptes." In *Costume et société dans l'Antiquité et le haut Moyen Âge*, edited by F. Chausson and H. Inglebert, 121–28 (Paris).
- Macrides, R. 1980. "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople—1261?" *BMGS* 6: 13–41.
- Macrides, R., J. Munitiz, and D. Angelov. 2013. *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies* (Farnham).
- Maguire, E. D. 1999. *Weavings from Roman, Byzantine and Islamic Egypt: The Rich Life and the Dance* (Urbana and Chicago).
- Maguire, E. D., H. Maguire, and M. Duncan-Flowers. 1989. *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana).
- Maguire, H. 1990. "Garments Pleasing to God: The Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period." *DOP* 44: 215–24.
- Maguire, H. 2009. "The Disembodied Hand, the *Prokypsis*, and the *Templon* Screen." In *ΑΝΑΘΗΜΑΤΑ ΕΟΠΤΙΚΑ: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. Mathews*, edited by J. Alchermes, H. Evans, and T. Thomas, 230–35 (Mainz am Rhein).
- Martiniani-Reber, M. 1991. *Tissus Coptes*. 2 vols. (Geneva).

- Martiniani-Reber, M., ed. 2000. *Parure d'une princesse byzantine: Tissus archéologiques de Sainte-Sophie de Mistra* (Geneva).
- Martiniani-Reber, M., ed. 2015. *Byzance en Suisse* (Geneva).
- Meller, H., I. Mundt, and B. Schmuhl, eds. 2008. *Der heilige Schatz im Dom zu Halberstadt* (Regensburg).
- Muthesius, A. 1997. *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to 1200* (Vienna).
- Nelson, R. 2015. "Modernism's Byzantium Byzantium's Modernism." In *Byzantium/Modernism*, edited by R. Betancourt and M. Taroutina, 15–36 (Leiden).
- Nitić, A., and Ž. Temerinski. 2006. "Le vêtement du tsar Ivan Alexandre conservé au Musée national de Belgrade: Tradition et nouveautés." *Cahiers balkaniques* 34: 161–78.
- Otavsky, K. 1998. "Zur kunsthistorischen Einordnung der Stoffe." In *Entlang der Seidenstraße: Frühmittelalterliche Kunst zwischen Persien un China*. Riggisberger Berichte 6, 119–14 (Riggisberg).
- Parani, M. 2003. *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden).
- Parani, M. 2007. "Cultural Identity and Dress: The Case of Late Byzantine Ceremonial Costume." *JÖB* 57: 95–134.
- Pfister, R., and L. Bellinger. 1945. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Final Report, IV. Part II: The Textiles* (New Haven).
- Popović, M., S. Gabelić, B. Cvetković, and B. Popović. 2005. *Crkva Svetog Nikole u Staničenju* (Belgrade).
- Riboud, K., and G. Vial. 1981. "Quelques considerations techniques concernant quatre soieries connues." In *Documenta Textilia: Festschrift für Sigrid Müller-Christensen*, edited by M. Flury-Lemberg and K. Stolleis, 149–54 (Munich).
- Schmidt-Colinet, A., A. Stauffer, and K. al-As'ad. 2000. *Die Textilien aus Palmyra: Neue und alte Funde* (Mainz am Rhein).
- Schorta, R. 2001. *Monochrome Seidengewebe des hohen Mittelalters* (Berlin).
- Stauffer, A. 1995. *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York).
- Stauffer, A. 1999. "Textiles." In *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, edited by G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, and O. Grabar, 5–17 (Cambridge, MA).
- Stephenson, J. 2014. "Veiling the Late Roman House." *Textile History* 45: 3–31.
- Strohmaier, P. 2017. "Vom liturgischem Textil zum Werbebanner?: Zwei byzantische Goldstickereien im Dom zu Halberstadt." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 80: 219–46.
- Thomas, T. K. 2007. "Coptic and Byzantine Textiles Found in Egypt: Corpora, Collections, and Scholarly Perspectives." In *Egypt in the Byzantine World*, edited by R. Bagnall, 137–62 (Cambridge).
- Thomas, T. K. 2009. "From Curiosities to Objects of Art: Modern Reception of Late Antique Egyptian Textiles as Reflected in Dikran Kelekian's Textile Album of ca. 1910." In *ANAΘHMATA EOΠTIKA: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. Mathews*, edited by J. Alchermes, H. Evans, and T. Thomas, 300–12 (Mainz am Rhein).
- Thomas, T. K. 2012. "Silks." In *Byzantium and Islam*, 148–59.
- Thomas, T. K. 2016. "Material Meaning in Late Antiquity." In *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity*, edited by T. Thomas, 20–53 (New York).
- Thompson, J., and H. Granger-Taylor. 1995. "The Persian Zilu Loom of Meybod." *Bulletin du CIETA* 73: 27–53.
- von Lerber, K. 1992. "A Medieval Bell-Shaped Chasuble from St. Peter in Salzburg." *Journal of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 4: 27–51.

- von Wilckens, L. 1991. *Die textilen Künste von der Spätantike bis um 1500* (Munich).
- Walker, A. 2012. *The Emperor and the World: Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E.* (Cambridge).
- Wild, J. P. 2003. "The Later Roman and Early Byzantine East." In *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, edited by D. Jenkins, Vol. 1, 140–53 (Cambridge).
- Woodfin, W. 2012. *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford).
- Woodfin, W. 2013. "Repetition and Replication: Sacred and Secular Patterned Textiles." In *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*, edited by C. Nesbitt and M. Jackson, 35–55 (Farnham).
- Woodfin, W., Y. Rassamakin, and R. Holod. 2010. "Foreign Vesture and Nomadic Identity on the Black Sea Littoral in the Early Thirteenth Century: Costume from the Chungul Kurgan." *Ars Orientalis* 38: 153–84.

# INDEX

---

- Abu Mina in Mar'yut, Egypt, 25–26, 311–12  
*acheiropoieta/acheiropoieiton* images, 62–63, 222  
Acheiropoieitos, church of, 311  
Achilleios, Hagios, 237  
*Acta* (Acts) of Church councils, 289–90  
Adamnán, 76–77  
*Ad Herennium*, 160  
Adrianople Gospels, 182–84  
*aedicula* of St. Peter, 310  
agate cup, 505  
*Age of Spirituality* exhibition, 90  
Agios Dimitrios in Thessaloniki, 572–73  
agricultural settlements, 363–64  
*Akathistos* hymn, 160, 433–34, 471–72  
al-Aqsa mosque, 205–6  
Alexander, Ivan, 238–39  
Alexander of Tralles, 94  
*Alexander Romance*, 482–84, 483*f*, 492  
“Alexandrian Group” of silks, 595–96  
Alexandrian theologians, 23  
Alexios I Komnenos, 320  
Allerheiligen-Hofkirche (Court Church of All Saints), 272, 273*f*, 279–80  
al-Walid, Caliph, 205–6  
ambo of Hagia Sophia church, Constantinople, 33*f*, 33–35  
Ambrosian Library in Milan, 481–82  
Ammonius, 464  
*amphorae*, 297, 526, 551–52  
amulets. *See also apotropaic* power of images/  
objects; magic in Byzantine art  
aniconic crosses, 533  
artistic development of, 536–37  
Bleeding Woman amulet, 87–90, 88*f*  
devotional purpose of, 525  
*enkolpia* pendants, 110–11  
gospel text on, 87–89, 88*f*  
healing amulets/magic, 87, 527–30  
hematite amulet, 87–90, 88*f*  
Kelsey amulet, 91–94, 92*f*  
magical functions of, 90–93, 92*f*, 109–10, 525  
military combat and, 529*f*, 529–30  
protection amulets/magic, 87  
ring signs in amulets, 91  
silver-gilt *enkolpia*, 535–36  
Woman with the Issue of Blood, 109–10  
womb amulets, 530, 536  
*analepsis* of icons, 63  
Anapli Gate, Mystras, 369*f*  
Anastasis Rotunda, 310–11  
anathema/anathematized, 22, 23–24, 81  
Andrew of Crete, 164–65, 169–70  
Andronikos I, 139  
Andronikos II, 364  
Andronikov Monastery in Moscow, 380, 381*f*  
Ani Cathedral, 182, 183*f*  
Annunciation iconography, 167–68, 168*f*  
Anthemios of Tralles, 313  
anti-icon sentiment and Iconoclasm, 82  
Antikensammlung of Berlin, 22  
*antimensia* cloth, 264  
antiquities market, 150, 151–53  
anti-Semitism, 256–57  
*antistrophe*, defined, 160  
*antithesis* technique in visual art, 163–67  
Aphrodite, 25, 110, 111*f*  
*Apostelkanne* treasure, 501  
Apostles  
in art, 27, 419, 420*f*, 463–64  
Communion of the Apostles in art, 501–2, 511  
frescoes of, 178, 179–80  
liturgical objects and, 501–2, 506*f*  
symbolically depicted, 162–63  
*Apostolic Constitutions*, 497  
*apotropaic* power of images/objects, 55, 61–62, 91–93, 110–11, 525, 526, 533, 537

- apparatus criticus* in historical research, 290–91
- archaeology and art history, 153–54. *See also* excavations
- Archangel Gabriel imagery, 431, 432*f*
- Archangel Michael fresco, 242*f*
- architectural polychromy, 409–20
- Arch of Constantine, 135, 139–40
- Arkadi Monastery, 257–58
- Armenia/Armenian Republic. *See also* Mren church; Zvart'nots' church
- Age of the Kingdoms, 181–84
- Bagratid kingdom, 181–84
- Byzantium and, 186–87
- Cilicia in, 184–86
- introduction to, 177
- in the seventh century, 177–81
- Armenian-Byzantine artistic relations, 186–87
- Arsenal Bible, 226–28
- Artemios, Saint, 26–27
- artistic exchanges, 222–24
- art's agency theory, 42
- Arts and Crafts movement, 271, 280
- Artsruni, Gagik, 181–82
- ARTstor image sharing site, 11
- Art Workers' Guild, 281
- Asen, Constantine Tich, 237–38
- Asen II, Ivan, Tsar, 237–38
- Assiut Treasure, 148
- Astrapas, Eutychiocs, 428–29
- Astrapas, Michael, 428–29
- Athonite fathers, 193–94
- Attarouthi Treasure, 500
- auctions for private collectors, 147–48
- authenticity concerns with enamels, 587
- Bachkovo Monastery, 238–39
- backgrounds and ornament, painters of (*pictori parietario*), 412
- Baden-Württemberg excavations law, 150–51
- Bagratuni, Ashot, 181
- Balsamon, Theodore, 86
- base metal icons, 515–16
- Basil I (the Great), 133, 236, 241
- Basilica Cistern in Constantinople, 55
- Basilicas. *See also* St. Peter's Basilica
- axial scheme of, 309–10
- Byzantine architecture of, 309–13
- Cathedral of John the Baptist, 205–6
- cross-domed basilicas, 314–17
- cross-in-square basilicas, 316, 384
- domed bema basilica, 384, 386
- five-aisled basilica, 310–11
- in Islam and the Middle East, 209
- San Marco basilica, 220, 382, 383*f*
- of St. Peter, 310, 401
- three-aisled basilica, 312–13
- Basilius me fecit*, artist, 226
- Basil of Caesarea, 476
- Basil of Cappadocia, 204
- battitura di filo* technique, 411
- Bauforschung method, 288
- Bavarian excavations law, 150–51
- Benaki, Antonis, 148
- Benaki Museum in Athens, 11, 262, 520
- Berlinghieri, Berlinghiero, 223
- Beth Misona Treasure, 498–99, 499*f*
- Bibliothèque nationale de France, 91–93
- Blachernai mosaic, 26
- Bliss, Robert Woods, 148
- Bobbio Duomo Treasury, 91–93
- Bode, Wilhelm von, 148
- bodily adornment and modification. *See also* jewelry and adornment
- further research directions on, 112–13
- gender impact on, 108–9
- iconography of, 109–12
- in non-elite people, 109
- social status and, 106–9
- summary of, 112
- as a vice, 100–4
- as a virtue, 104–6
- Boeotia Survey, 297–98
- Boilas, Eustathios, 123–24
- Boisserée brothers, 272, 275–76
- Book of Ceremonies*, 106
- Book of Job*, 461–62
- Book of Kings*, 226, 461
- Book of the Eparch*, 596–98
- Botkin, M., 586
- “Botkins” enamels, 587
- Branković, George, 364
- British Library, 221, 470*f*

- British Museum in London, 11, 65–67, 69, 85–86, 91–93, 148, 151, 264–65, 497–98, 582
- bronze jewelry, 575, 576*f*
- Bulgarian art and architecture, 236–40, 375–76
- Bulgarian Chronicle of Manasses, 484
- Burne-Jones, Edward, 280
- Byzance après Byzance*, 3, 7–8, 255–69
- Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens, 11, 12
- Byzantine archaeology. *See also* archaeology and art history; excavations
- art historical ancestry of, 288–89
  - defined, 287–88
  - introduction, 287–89
  - methodology and theory, 290–93
  - scholarship trends, 293–98
  - sources of, 289–90
  - trends in, 298–99
- Byzantine arts and architecture. 11–13, *See also* devotional practices and church architecture collection and display
- early work, 7
  - interpretation and analysis, 7–8
  - introduction to, 1–2
  - Near East Byzantine art, 1, 147, 151, 152, 541, 579, 599*f*
  - newer approaches to the study of, 9–10
  - outside of Constantinople, 7–8
  - periodicization of, 3
  - post-Byzantine art, 255–67
  - publications and presentations of, 10–11
  - purpose of, 2
  - scholarship history and approaches, 7–10
  - scholarship overview, 3–10
  - widening study of, 8–9
- Byzantine Commonwealth ecclesiastical architecture. *See also* SS. Trinità di Delia church
- Bulgaria, 375–76
  - future research directions, 386
  - introduction to, 373–75
  - medieval Rus', 378–80
  - Norman Italy, 383–86. *See also* Capella Palatina in Palermo
  - Serbia, 377–78
  - Veneto, Italy, 381–83
- Byzantine revival in Europe
- Boisserée brothers and, 272, 275–76
  - in Britain, 277–81
  - in France, 275–76
  - in Germany, 272–75
  - Goethe and, 272
  - introduction to, 271
  - patterns of, 272–75
  - “Byzantinizing” sculptures, 221
- Cabasilas, Nicholas, 62–63
- Cambrai Madonna, 69
- Canon for He Who Is at the Point of Death (*Kanon eis Psychorragounta*), 435–36
- Canon 61 of the Council of Trullo, 86
- Cappella Palatina in Palermo, 218–20, 219*f*, 272–73
- carved inscriptions, 452
- cast bronze icons, 519–22, 521*f*
- catacomb art, 25, 90, 398, 413–14
- Cathedral of Poreč, 161*f*, 161–62
- Celestial Liturgy, 511
- censers, 502, 510–11
- ceramics
- amphorae*, 297, 526, 551–52
  - cooking pots, 552–53
  - future research trends, 560
  - introduction to, 551
  - sfoungatera* cooking pot, 553
  - sgraffito/sgraffiato technique, 555–56
  - storage vessels, 552
  - tablewares, 553–60
  - transport vessels, 551–52
  - utilitarian use, 551–52
- chairetismoi* in *Akathistos* hymn, 160
- champlevé* technique, 510–11, 557
- Chapel of the Syncretic Gods in Karanis, 27
- checkerboarding in mosaic making, 396–97
- Chilandar Monastery on Mt. Athos, 435–36
- chlamys* cloak, 106, 108–9
- Choniates, Niketas, 103
- Chora Monastery in Constantinople, 428, 430, 433, 445*f*, 448–49, 572
- Chorikios of Gaza, 413
- Christ Chalkitēs, 238
- Christian church art and architecture. *See also* Crucifixion art; illuminated religious manuscripts; liturgical objects
- eikonidion* in Christian papyrus, 23–24



- Christian church art and architecture (*cont.*)  
 future research directions, 199  
 Islamic and Middle Eastern, 201–4  
 monumental painting, pre-Iconoclasm  
 409–20  
 monumental painting, post-Iconoclasm,  
 425–38  
 paintings on monastic walls, 416–19  
 religious portraits, 33–35  
 sanctuary architecture, 335–36
- Christianity  
 bodily adornment and modification as a  
 vice, 100–4  
 bodily adornment and modification as a  
 virtue, 104–6  
 divinities in, 21, 22  
 Eucharist, 26–27, 331–32, 334–35, 500–1, 533  
 Holy Trinity, 82  
 Orthodox Christianity, 81, 104, 190–91, 255–  
 56, 257, 261–62, 386, 593  
 spread in Constantinople, 373–74  
 theology and magic, 86–87
- Christianization processes, 294
- Christianized Serbs, 241
- Christianized South Slavs, 236–37
- Christian Topography of Cosmas*  
*Indicopleustes*, 488–89
- Christ in art  
 Bleeding Woman amulet, 87–90, 88*f*  
 Crucifixion iconography, 65, 66*f*, 222–23, 224*f*  
 Duccio di Buoninsegna's Madonna and  
 Child, 223  
 Enthroned Christ plaque, 516, 517*f*  
*Flagellation of Christ*, 141  
 Last Judgment fresco, 210, 211*f*  
 Last Judgment iconography, 259, 260*f*  
 marble icon screen of, 27  
 Virgin seated with the Christ Child, 162
- Christ in Majesty, 209
- Christ “not made by human hands,” 32
- Christological controversies, 63
- Christ on the Chalkē Gate, 61–62
- Christ Pantokrator  
 as dome decoration, 319, 341, 379  
 as exterior painting, 260  
 icons of, 27, 60–61, 62*f*, 218–20  
*katavasia* text surrounding, 433–34, 434*f*  
 on medallions, 508  
 monastery dedications to, 320
- Chronicle of the Monk George*  
 (“Hamartolos”), 484
- chronicles and historical texts, 484
- Chrysostom, John, 135–36, 461–62, 471,  
 474–76, 528
- Chrysotriklinos* in the Great Palace, 374
- “Church E,” Sardis, 322–23
- Church of  
 Christ Pantepoptes (Eski Imaret Camii), 320  
 Christ Philantropos in Constantinople,  
 324–25  
 Hagia Aikatherine, 326  
 Hagios Panteleimon, 326  
 Hagios Vasileos, 323  
 Hodegetria, 326  
 Ioannes Prodromos, 323–24  
 John the Baptist in Beirut, 210  
 Prophet Naum, 322–23  
 St. George, 335*f*  
 St. Nicholas, 242–43  
 St. Panteleimon, 222–23, 336*f*  
 St. Peter in Ras, 241  
 St. Polyeuktos, 27, 202  
 St. Simeon Stylites, 202  
 St. Stephen, 413  
 Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (*Küçük Ayasofya*  
*Camii*), 241
- Church of the  
 Annunciation, 246*f*, 378  
 Ascension in the Mileševa Monastery,  
 Serbia, 428  
 Chora in Constantinople, 392–93, 396*f*  
 Dormition in Nicaea, 402  
 Dormition of the Virgin at Skripou,  
 Boeotia, 51–52  
 Forty Martyrs, 238  
 Holy Apostles. *See* Holy Apostles church  
 Holy Savior at Žiča, Serbia, 244  
 Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, 201–2, 210, 225  
 Holy Trinity, at Sopoćani Monastery, 245*f*, 248  
 Hospitallers of St. John in Emmaus, 210  
 Mother of God of Petrichka, 376*f*, 376  
 Nativity in Bethlehem, 224–25, 311, 394*f*, 394  
 Panagia at Skripou, 318  
 Pokrov Bogoroditsy, 380

- Theotokos at the monastery of Hosios Loukas, 317–18  
 Virgin, Studenica, 377*f*, 377–78  
 Virgin, Wadi al-Natrun (Scetis), 418–19  
 Virgin of the Life-giving Spring, 504  
 Virgin Paregoretissa, Arta, 323, 324*f*  
*chytra*, 552–53  
 civic architecture of Islam and the Middle East, 207–8  
 Classical art, 22, 121, 125–26, 229–31  
 Classical rhetoric rules, 290–91  
*clavi* embellishments, 101. *See also* Coptic textiles  
 Clement II, Pope, 598–99, 599*f*  
 Cleveland Museum of Art, 498–99  
*cloisonné* technique, 222, 317–18, 319, 367–68, 583–84. *See also* enamel/enameling  
*Code of Justinian*, 352, 577–78  
 Codex Ebnerianus Group, 464–66  
*coenobitic* form of monasticism, 34  
 coins. *See also* “Kyrenia Girdle”  
   coins in circulation and adornment, 133–34  
   coins as metalwork, 515  
   numismatics as a discipline, 153–54  
 colophon attributions, 459  
 Colossus of Barletta, 136–37, 137*f*  
 columns, as *spolia* 50–51  
*comes sacrarum largitionum*, 503–4  
 Communion of the Apostles in art, 501–2, 511  
 comparison technique in visual art, 163–67  
 computerized bibliographic databases, 11  
 Constantine IX, 585–86  
 Constantine the Great, 3, 47–48, 309–13, 495  
 Constantine V, 28, 65, 81  
 Constantine VII, 218–20, 235–36, 504, 543, 585–86  
 Constantinople. *See also* Holy Apostles church, Constantinople; “North Church” of the Monastery of Lips; Obelisk Base of Theodosius  
   archaeology and topography of, 293–94  
   architectural studies of, 288  
   Byzantine art outside of, 7–8  
   Crusader conquest of, 508–9  
   *De materia medica* (Dioscorides), 485–87, 486*f*  
   fall of, 3, 364  
   fortification architecture, 367  
   Georgian orientation toward, 193–94, 196  
   Golden Gate, Constantinople, 125–26, 127*f*  
   Latin capture of, 140, 586  
   marble icon screen of, 27  
   Marian devotion as defense of, 25  
   plunder by Latin crusaders, 221  
   reconquest of, 3  
   religious uses of icons, 21–22  
   secular architecture in, 124–26  
   spread of Christianity in, 373–74  
 Constantius II, 312–13  
 Contarini, Giovanni, 382  
 cooking pots, 552–53  
 copper alloy reliquary crosses, 533, 534*f*  
 copper *repoussé* icons, 516–18  
 Coptic, defined, 409  
 Coptic images, 59–60  
 Coptic Museum, 91–93  
 Coptic textiles, 593–94  
 corporeal mortification, 100  
 cosmic symbolism, 332–33  
 Cotton Genesis manuscript, 221, 461  
 Council in Trullo, 101–2, 108  
 Council of Chalcedon, 204, 212  
 Council of Ephesus, 25  
 Council of Ferrara-Florence, 141  
 Council of Nicaea II, 65  
 Council of the Hundred Chapters, 261–62  
 Cretan icons, 261–66  
*croix-inscrite* in church architecture, 191  
*croix-libre* in church architecture, 191  
 cross-domed basilicas, 314–17  
 crosses  
   aniconic crosses, 533  
   copper alloy reliquary crosses, 533, 534*f*  
   as devotional objects, 526–30, 528*f*  
   gold crosses as jewelry, 527, 528*f*  
   Latin cross, 531  
   military combat and, 529*f*, 529–30  
   pectoral crosses, 526–30, 531–33  
   “Pliska Cross” liturgical object, 504, 531  
   True Cross, 526–30, 531, 533–35  
 Crucifixion art  
   symbolized in the apse, 333–34  
   in devotional objects, 532, 534–36, 548*f*  
   iconography of, 65, 66*f*, 222–23, 224*f*  
 Crucifixion of Christ, 165

- cruciform-domed church, 191, 196
- Crusader art and architecture. *See also*  
 military architecture of the Crusaders  
 conquest of Constantinople, 508–9  
 future research directions, 229–31  
 iconography of, 59–60, 65–69, 70  
 introduction to, 217–18  
 in Islam and the Middle East, 209–12  
 in Jerusalem, 210, 217  
 multiethnic patronage, 224–28  
 sponsored paintings, 423–24
- Cult of Mary, 25–26
- cult of relics, 78, 344
- Cynegetica* hunting text, 488, 492
- Cyprian, Bishop, 104
- Damaskinos, Michael, 260–61, 264–66, 265f
- “Dark Ages” period, 290, 293
- De administrando imperio* (Constantine VII  
 Porphyrogenitos), 235–36
- De Aedificiis (On Buildings)* (Procopius),  
 290–91
- Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences)  
 Act, 154
- Dečani Monastery, 247
- decentralization of glazed pottery  
 workshops, 559
- De materia medica* (Dioscorides), 485–87, 486f
- demons/demonology, 86–87, 94, 528
- dendrochronology dating, 9–10, 292–93,  
 392–93
- Despoineta (embroiderer), 262–64
- Despotate of Epiros, 323
- de-urbanization, 295
- devotional objects  
 artistic development of, 536–37  
 crosses, 526–30, 528f  
*enkolpia* as, 533–36  
 future research directions, 537  
 intercession and salvation in, 530–36  
 introduction to, 525  
 ivories, 7, 218–20, 541–48  
 in magic and healing, 527–30  
 pectoral reliquary crosses, 531–33  
*phylakterion* use in, 525, 536  
 steatites as, 549  
 womb amulets, 530, 536
- devotional practices and church architecture.  
*See also* Holy Land, Nativity Basilica at  
 Bethlehem  
 accommodating the Holy in, 343–44  
 Byzantine monasticism and, 344  
 developments in, 338–43  
 forma and function in, 345–46  
 introduction to, 331–32  
 liturgical ritual and, 334–37  
 main ideas and aspects, 332–34  
*diatrita* technique, 578–79  
*Digenes Akritas*, 482  
 digital archives and photography, 11  
*Digital Tabula Imperii Byzantini* project (*Dig-  
 TIB*), 299  
 Diocesan Museum of Christian Art Munich-  
 Freising, 149  
 Dionysus, 23, 25, 126–28  
 Dioscorides, 485, 486f, 487, 488  
 Diözesanmuseum of Speyer, 598  
 diptychs, 542–43  
 Direction of Truth, 202, 207  
*diskopteria* liturgical sets, 500  
*diskos*, 507f  
 Divine Liturgy  
 icons, 28, 257–58, 264–66, 265f  
 spaces for, 331  
 structure of, 334–35, 340  
 Dogmatic Panoply (Zigabenos), 477  
 dog-tooth friezes, 323  
 domed bema basilica, 384, 386  
 Dome of the Rock, 205, 207, 399  
 domestic architecture, 129–30  
 Doukas, Theodore Komnenos, 237–38  
 dream interpretation books, 123–24  
 dreams and imagination in art, 31  
 Dumbarton Oaks Research Library  
 and Collection, 11, 91–93, 141, 148, 448,  
 582, 586  
 Dura Europos paintings, 8
- Early Byzantine era  
 application of term, 288  
 devotional practices and church  
 architecture, 338–40  
 doctors/scientists, 89–90  
 fortification architecture, 365, 367

- glass vessels, 565–67, 566*f*  
 in Greece, 294–96  
 hair style depictions, 108  
 housing in, 351–56  
 introduction to, 3, 4*f*  
 Islamic and Middle Eastern art and  
   architecture, 201–2  
 ivory use in, 541–42  
 jewelry and adornment, 101, 106, 577–79  
 liturgical objects, 496–97  
 pagan iconography, 110  
 paintings on monument walls, 409–20  
 religious architecture of, 309–16  
 rural archaeology, 297  
 stone sculpture during, 446–47  
 tablewares, 553–54  
 textile media, 594–95
- Early Christian period  
   adornment as sin, 99–100  
   amulet use, 526  
   archaeological studies, 287–88  
   biblical sites from, 225  
   fortification architecture, 363, 369  
   geometric patterns, 207  
   glass jewelry, 570–71  
   introduction to, 12  
   ivory use, 542–43  
   light in architecture of, 207  
   mosaic use, 404–5  
   principal architectural forms, 201–2  
   private collections and, 147–48, 149  
   public interest in, 148  
   religious motifs, 553–54  
   scholarly writings, 208–9  
   sculpture and painting, 202–4  
   statuettes from, 25  
   window panes, 573
- early iconography, 26–28  
 Eastern Orthodoxy, 235–36, 248  
 ecclesiastical archaeology, 296  
 ecclesiastical architecture. *See* Christian  
   church art and architecture; devotional  
   practices and church architecture
- Edict of Maximum Prices (Diocletian), 412  
 Edict of Milan, 309  
 Edward the Confessor, 599  
 egg tempera technique, 21–22
- Egyptian divinities, 22  
 Egyptian mummy portraits, 21  
 Egyptian obelisk, 49*f*  
 Egyptian paintings, 21  
*eikonidion* in Christian papyrus, 23–24  
*ekphrasis* in Byzantine art  
   ambo of Hagia Sophia church, 33*f*, 33–35  
   defined, 90, 167  
   devotional practices and church building,  
     333–34  
   introduction to, 31–32  
   medieval *ekphrasis*, 32, 34–35  
   Mother and Child mosaic in Hagia Sophia  
     church, 32, 36–38, 37*f*  
   *poikilia* in icon of Archangel Michael, 38–42,  
     39*f*, 40*f*  
   role of, 42  
   summary of, 41–42  
*émail champlevé* (*Grubenschmelz*), 584–85  
*émail cloisonné* (*Zellenschmelz*), 583–84  
*émail enfoncé* (*Senkschmelz*), 583–84  
*empsychōsis* (embedded spirit), 35  
 enamel/enameling  
   authenticity concerns, 587  
   “Botkins” enamels, 587  
   *champlevé* technique, 510–11, 557  
   *cloisonné* technique, 222, 317–18, 319, 367–68,  
     583–84  
   dated enamels, 585–86  
   future research directions, 587  
   introduction to, 581–82, 582*f*  
   research problems, 586–87  
   *Senkschmelz* enamels, 585–86  
   techniques of, 583–85, 584*f*  
   *Vollschmelz cloisonné* enamels, 505
- Encolpion* of Martvili, 195*f*, 195  
*encomia* speeches, 163–64  
*enkolpia* as devotional objects, 533–36  
*enkolpia* pendants, 110–11  
 Enthroned Christ plaque, 516, 517*f*  
*ep'agatho* inscription, 21  
*epanaphora*, defined, 160  
 epigrams in Byzantine art, 41  
 Episkopi in Eurytania, 12  
*epitaphios* embroidery, 511, 601  
*epitaphios* iconography, 262–64, 263*f*, 265–66  
*Epitaphios Threnos*, 262–64, 263*f*

- Eski Imaret Camii (Church of Christ Pantepoptes), 321*f*
- Esztergom Staurotheke, 586
- Eucharist, 26–27, 331–32, 334–35, 500–1, 533
- Euchologia* manuscripts, 461, 466–68
- Eudoxia, Empress, 135–36
- Eugenikos, Manuel, 198, 428
- Eulalios, 428
- Evangelia* lectionaries, 467–68, 468*f*
- evangelist portraits, 7
- excavations. *See also* archaeology
- Athenian Agora, 356
  - Baden-Württemberg excavations law, 150–51
  - Bavarian excavations law, 150–51
  - expense of, 292
  - legal and illegal, 150–56
  - stratigraphic and non-stratigraphic, 292
  - understanding of Byzantine economy through, 297
- exotica in secular art, 119
- export permissions, 154
- Fables* (Aesop), 123–24
- Feast of the Virgin, manuscript of homilies for, 476
- female martyrs, 160
- female *orant* figure, 109–10
- Ferrell, James E., 149
- fibula* pin, 106, 108–9
- field surveys, 291–92
- figural scenes (*pictori imaginario*), 410, 412, 415*f*, 416, 601–2
- figural *spolia*, 50–52
- Fine-sgraffito Ware, 555–56, 556*f*
- First Bulgarian Empire, 236–37
- five-aisled basilica, 310–11
- Flagellation of Christ* (Piero di Francesco), 141
- floor mosaics, 126–28, 202–4, 397–98, 410
- folding triptychs, 22, 24–25
- fortification architecture, 363–64, 366–70
- fortresses of Islam and the Middle East, 207–8
- Fourth Crusade, 3, 256
- Francesco, Piero di, 141
- freestanding towers in fortification architecture, 369–70
- Freising Icon, 586
- fresco buono* (fresh plaster), 425–26
- frescoes. *See also* Christian church art and architecture, monumental painting: pre-Iconoclasm; monumental painting: post-Iconoclasm
- of Apostles, 178, 179–80
  - in Georgian churches, 197–98
  - in Islam and the Middle East, 210, 211*f*
  - production of, 80, 411
  - purpose of, 2
- fresco secco* (dry plaster), 411, 416, 425–26
- Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 274–75
- funerary archaeology, 296
- Gabriel, Angel, 169–70
- Galla Placidia in Ravenna, 279–80
- gallery architecture, 339
- Galognano hoard, 500
- gates in fortification architecture, 368–69, 369*f*, 370
- gems and magic, 86–87, 90
- gender impact on bodily adornment and modification, 108–9
- Geographia Hyphegesis* (Ptolemy), 489
- geography texts, 488–89
- Georgian Christian art and architecture. *See also* Tsalenjikha murals
- early period, 189–92, 190*f*
  - introduction to, 189
  - later periods, 196–99
  - Orthodoxy and, 189–91
  - transitional period, 192–95
- Georgian Church, 189–90
- Géza I, 585–86
- gilded silver paten, 505–7
- Giotto, 167
- GIS (Global Information Systems) technology, 291–92, 297–98
- glass blowing invention, 565–66
- glass/glass art
- Early Byzantine vessels, 565–67, 566*f*
  - enameling techniques, 583–85, 584*f*
  - introduction to, 565–70
  - jewelry, 570–72, 571*f*
  - Late Byzantine vessels, 569*f*, 569–70
  - Middle Byzantine vessels, 567–68
  - mosaics, 568, 572–73
  - window panes, 573

- Glazed White Ware, 554–56
- Glory of Byzantium* exhibition, 586
- Goethe, 272
- gold crosses as jewelry, 527, 528*f*
- Golden Church (Round Church), Preslav, 236–37, 375
- Golden Gate, Constantinople, 125–26, 127*f*, 379
- gorgoneia* images, 55
- Gospel books (*tetraevangelia*), 464–66
- Gospel lectionaries (*evangelia*), 464–66
- Gospel text, illustrated, 87–89, 88*f*, 463–64, 502–3
- Gospel of John, 474
- Gospel of Luke, 25–26
- Gospel of Matthew, 25–26, 474
- Gospel of the Eight Painters, 186
- Gospel of Vani, 197–98
- Gospels of King Gagik of Kars, 182–84
- Gospels of Queen Keran, 184–86, 185*f*
- “Gothic Architecture” (Morris), 281
- Gothic churches, 2, 228
- Gothic ornamental repertoire, 437–38
- Gothic Revival, 277
- Gračanica Monastery, 246–47
- The Grammar of Ornament* (Jones), 279
- grave goods, 86–87
- Great Entrance for the Holy Saturday, 265–66
- Great Lavra of the Forty Martyrs, 237–38, 318
- Great Mosque of Cordoba, 399
- Great Mosque of Damascus, 399, 401
- Great Palace in Constantinople, 374, 375, 504–5, 535
- Greco-Roman world, 52, 118–19, 120–21, 124–25, 143, 447
- Greece in the Early Byzantine period, 294–96
- Greek Orthodoxy, 204
- Gregory of Nazianzus, 164
- Gregory of Nyssa, 526
- grisaille* technique, 167–68
- Grotto of St. Paul, 416–17, 417*f*
- Grotto of the Nativity, 311
- Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, 314–16, 315*f*, 332–33, 402
- Hagia Sophia church, Constantinople  
 ambo of, 33*f*, 33–35  
 archaeology of, 293–94  
 architecture of, 311, 313–14, 332–33  
 iconoclasm and, 79–80  
 imperial portraits in, 133  
 lectures at, 467–68  
 liturgical objects in, 496, 504–5  
 Morris’s interest in, 281  
 mosaics of, 32, 36–38, 396–97, 398–99, 402, 403–4  
 sacred images of, 81  
 statue of the empress Eudoxia, 135–36  
 stone sculpture decoration, 449, 450  
 study of, 2  
 templon screen of, 27
- Hagia Sophia church, Ohrid  
 painters of, 428–29  
 painting and death rituals, 435–36
- Hagia Sophia church, Thessaloniki  
 architecture, 311, 314–16
- Hagia Sophia church, Trebizond  
 architecture, 332–33, 333*f*  
 stone sculpture on exterior, 452, 453*f*
- Hagia Theotokos* (Holy God-Bearer) image, 532
- hagiography, 86–87, 459
- Hagios Demetrios church, Thessaloniki, 311, 312*f*
- Hagios Polyeuktos church, 313
- hair style depictions, 108
- Halieutika* (Oppian), 487
- Harbaville Triptych, 543, 544*f*
- healing amulets/magic, 87, 527–30. *See also*  
 magic in Byzantine art
- Helbing, Hugo, 152–53
- Hellenistic conventions, 21, 272, 481–82
- hematite amulet, 87–90, 88*f*
- “Hero of Byzantium,” 489–91, 490*f*
- hesychasm* movement, 239–40
- hierarchic registers, 22
- Hilandar Monastery, Mt. Athos, 245–46, 338*f*
- Hippodrome in Constantinople, 47–48
- historical testimonia, 292–93
- historical texts, 484
- Hodegetria* images, 62–63
- Holy Anargyroi church in Kastoria, 433
- Holy Apostles church,  
 Constantinople, 381–82, 447
- Holy Apostles church, Thessaloniki, 326, 342–43, 378, 392–93, 428, 430–31, 572
- Holy Face images, 62–63, 222

- Holy Land, 189–90, 193–94, 224–25, 311, 392  
 Nativity Basilica at Bethlehem, 343–44  
 Nativity mosaic, 165, 166*f*
- Holy Rider, 529*f*, 529–30
- Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, 343–44, 502, 527
- Holy Spirit, 79, 464–66
- holy women, 103
- homiletic literature, 459, 475*f*
- Horologion* manuscripts, 468–71
- horse and rider motif, 202
- Hosios Loukas monastery, 241, 317*f*, 319, 428, 449–50, 451*f*, 451
- household items and, 86–87
- humanism movement, 239–40
- “Hunnic” hair style, 108
- hunting texts, 488
- hymns in illuminated religious manuscripts, 471–72
- hypogeum* (“underground” tomb), 413–14
- Hysmine and Hysminias* (Makrembolites), 424
- Iconoclasm/Iconoclastic era  
 aftermath of, 34  
 anti-icon sentiment and, 82  
 in Armenia, 181  
 Christian religious portrait and, 33–35  
 Council in Trullo, 75–78  
 defined, 75–76  
 devotional objects and, 530  
 in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, 79–80  
*iconomachy* period, 75–76, 81  
 impact on secular art in churches, 122–23  
 introduction to, 3  
 made by human hands, 38–41  
 not made by human hands, 36–38  
 perception of images after, 31  
 pro-icon sentiment and, 82  
 Second Iconoclasm period, 81  
 systematic demolition of, 79–80
- Iconoclastic Controversy, 62–63, 193, 402, 530, 531–32
- iconography. *See also* Christian paradise representations; inscriptions in; symbolism of light in; Virgin and Child iconography  
 aniconic crosses, 533  
 Annunciation iconography, 167–70  
 of bodily adornment and modification, 109–12  
 of Christ Pantokrator, 27, 218–20  
 Cretan, 261–65  
 Crucifixion iconography, 222–23, 224*f*  
 Crusader, 65–69, 70, 224–28  
 cult of Mary, 25–26  
 early iconography, 26–28  
 emotion, representation of, 65  
*epitaphios* iconography, 263*f*, 264  
 Holy Trinity, 51–52  
 iconographic similarities across periods, 3  
 iconographic *formulae*, 59–60  
 Last Judgment iconography, 259, 260*f*  
 Late Byzantine era iconography, 257–58, 258*f*  
 Orthodox iconography, 59–60, 67–70  
 pagan iconography/images, 27, 110–11, 120–21, 126–28, 413–14  
*prolepsis/analepsis*, 63  
 Russian, 70  
 secular art and, 129–30  
 on textiles, 262–64  
*vita* icons, 61–62
- iconostasis, 61–62, 226–28, 336, 450, 519
- Icons  
 analepsis of, 63  
 Annunciation, 167–70  
 base metal icons, 515–16  
 bronze cast icons, 519–22, 521*f*  
 copper repoussé icons, 516–18  
 Cretan icons, 260–66, 261*f*  
 definition of icon, 60  
 Divine Liturgy, 257–58, 264–66, 265*f*  
 Freising Icon, frame, 586  
 historiated frames, 65  
 “Madonna della Madia” icon, 222  
 magic and icons, 87  
 marble icon screen, 27  
 materials, 60–61  
 Middle Byzantine era, 65  
 overview of icon studies, 59–70  
 Pantokrator, 62*f*  
 poikilia in icon of Archangel Michael, 38–42, 39*f*, 40*f*  
 prolepsis of icons, 63  
 proskynesis icon, 61–62

- proskynesis before an icon, 77  
 repoussé icons in copper, 516–18  
 Russian icons, 70, 261–62  
 St. Alexis icon, 70, 71f  
 St. George icon, 68f, 76–77  
 study of icons, 8–9  
 syncretism and, 22–24  
 templon screen, 22, 26–28  
 three-part folding icon/triptych, 25  
 types, 61–62  
 vita icon, 61–62  
 wood panel icon, 26
- Iliad* (Homer), 481–82, 487
- illegal excavations, 150–56
- illuminated religious manuscripts. *See under*  
   individual manuscripts  
   *Euchologia* manuscripts, 461, 466–68  
   Gospel books and lectionaries, 464–66, 465f  
   homiletic literature, 459, 475f  
   hymns, 471–72  
   introduction to, 459  
   Joshua Roll, 226  
   lectionaries (*Evangelia*), 467–68, 468f  
   New Testament, 463–66  
   Old Testament, 460–63  
   in private Swenigorodskoi collection, 148  
   Psalter and Horologion manuscripts,  
     468–71, 469f, 470f  
   *synaxarion* and *menologion* texts, 472, 473f  
   theological texts and compilations,  
     476–77  
   Virgin and Child iconography, 469–70
- illuminated secular manuscripts  
   chronicles and historical texts, 484  
   conventions and literary texts, 481–84  
   future research directions, 491–92  
   on geography, 488–89  
   on hunting, 488  
   on medicine and natural history, 485–88  
   on warfare, 489–91
- imagination (*phantasia*) in Byzantine  
   art, 31–32, 41–42
- imperial portraiture  
   emerging practices in, 137–40  
   future research directions, 142–43  
   introduction to, 133–35, 134f  
   monuments as, 135–37, 137f
- in secular art, 120, 123  
   syncretism in, 24
- import bans, 156
- Incised-sgraffito Ware, 556–57, 559f
- Intelligible Beauty*, 576
- intercession and devotional objects, 530–36
- interpretatio Christiana* spolia, 52–53
- Iorga, Nicolae, 256–57
- iron jewelry, 575–76
- Isidore the Archbishop of Thessalonica, 168–69
- Isidorus of Miletus, 313
- Isis, 25–26
- Islamic and Middle Eastern art and  
   architecture. *See also* al-Aqsa mosque;  
   Koran; *tiraz* in Islamic art  
   Christian art under Muslim rule, 208–9  
   Christian paradise representations, 206  
   civic architecture, 207–8  
   Crusader architecture, 209–12  
   Early Byzantine era, 201–2  
   foundations of, 201–4  
   future research directions, 212  
   geometric patterns in, 207  
   inscriptions in, 207  
   introduction to, 201  
   Middle Byzantine era, 111–12  
   Muslim conquest and, 204–8  
   religious architecture, 205–7  
   scientific illustration, 491–92  
   sculpture and painting, 202–4, 203f  
   small portable objects, 204, 208  
   symbolism of light in, 207  
   vessels, 569f, 569–70
- Islamic State (IS), 152
- Istanbul Archaeological Museum, 91–93, 447
- Italian art and architecture  
   artistic exchanges and naturalistic style,  
     222–24  
   ecclesiastical architecture, 381–86  
   future research directions, 229–31  
   Gothic paintings, 165  
   imperial art, 218–22  
   introduction to, 1, 217–18  
   mosaics of, 401
- ivories/ivory figures, 7, 218–20, 541–48. *See*  
   also Harbaville Triptych; Romanos Ivory;  
   Veroli Casket



- Jaharis Lectionary, 468*f*  
 Jaroslav the Wise, 379  
 Jerusalem  
   Church of the Holy Sepulcher, 201–2, 210, 225  
   Crusader architecture, 210  
   Dome of the Rock in, 205, 207  
   Georgian orientation away from, 193–94  
 Jerusalemite liturgical practice, 189–90  
 jewelry and adornment. *See also* jewelry in Cretan murals  
   Aphrodite pendant, 110, 111*f*  
   body jewelry, 575  
   Early Byzantine era, 101, 106, 577–79  
   future research directions, 581  
   glass jewelry, 570–72, 571*f*  
   gold crosses as, 527, 528*f*  
   introduction to, 575–76  
   Late Byzantine era, 580–81  
   Middle Byzantine era, 111–12, 579–80  
   narrative scenes on, 578  
   numismatic jewelry, 133–34  
   research on, 576–77  
 John II, 222, 320  
 John of Damascus, 62–63, 181, 477  
 John VIII, 140–41  
 Jones, Owen, 279  
 Joshua Roll, 461. *See also* illuminated religious manuscripts  
 JSTOR database, 11  
 Julian of Ascalon, 352  
 Justinian  
   *Code of Justinian*, 352, 577–78  
   fortification architecture, 363–64  
   imperial portrait of, 123  
   as last of the Roman emperors, 3  
   liturgical gifts from, 496  
   mosaic representation of, 218  
   Qasr Ibn Wardan church and palace, 208  
   reign of, 2, 218  
   religious architecture of, 313–14, 374  
   social status and adornment, 106–8  
   Theodora (wife of Justinian), 108–9, 110, 123, 218  
 Justinianic Law Code, 106, 108–9  
 Justinianic Plague, 296  
 Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, 148  
 Kallistos, Nikephoros, 428  
 Kameniates, Ionnes, 567  
 Kamsarakan, Nerseh, 178  
*kanon* (chant), 36  
 Kantakuzenos, Manuel, 508–9  
 Kantorowicz, Ernst, 134–35  
 Kaper Koraon Treasure, 500–2  
*katholikon* of the Kaisariani monastery, 257–58, 258*f*  
 Kelsey amulet, 91–94, 92*f*  
 Kelsey Museum, 90–93  
 K'ert'ogh, Vrt'anēs, 181  
 Khantzeli, Grigol, Saint, 192–93  
 Kievan Radziwill Chronicle, 484  
 “King’s Two Bodies” (Kantorowicz), 134–35  
 Kinnamos, John, 423–24  
 Kladon, Basil, 364  
 Klenze, Leo von, 273*f*, 273–74  
 Klimakos, John, 476–77  
 Klontzas, Georgios, 259  
 Knight, Henry Gally, 277–78  
*Koiranides* (*Cyranides*) encyclopedia, 110  
 Kokkinobaphos, Jacob, 476  
*kokoshniki* gables, 380  
 Komnene, Anna, 104–6  
 Komnenian period  
   architectural style, 320–22  
   art, 228–29  
   box-like *enkolpia*, 535  
   decline of power, 363–64  
   monumental painting, 427  
 Komnenos, Alexios III, 482  
 Komnenos, Manuel I, 139, 225–26, 242–43, 423–24, 452  
 Komnenos, Michael I Angelos Doukas, 364  
 Kondakov, N.P., 148  
 Konrad of Krosigk, 505–7  
 Koran, 207  
 Koreseli, Michael, 197–98  
 Krumbacher, Karl, 148  
*Kunst und Altertum*, 272  
 Kykkotissa, 67–69  
 “Kyrenia Girdle,” 134*f*, 134  
*The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Klimakos), 476–77  
 Lamentation of the Virgin, 63, 222–23

- language studies, 31, 85, 93–94, 226
- La Peinture religieuse grecque post-byzantine et néo-hellénistique* exhibition, 256
- Lapsq'aldi Four Gospels, 197–98, 198f
- L'Architecture byzantine en France* (Verneilh), 276
- Last Judgment, 259, 260f
- Last Judgment fresco, 210, 211f
- Late Antique period
- archaeology of, 288
  - doctors/scientists in, 89–90
  - Egypt, 593, 594
  - folding triptychs, 22, 24–25
  - literary texts, 481–82
  - liturgical objects, 496–97
  - magic during, 85–86, 91
  - natural history texts, 487
  - paintings, 22
  - Palestine, 352, 353f
  - syncretism in, 23
  - textile media, 594–95, 595f
  - urban archaeology of, 294–95
- Late Byzantine era
- application of term, 288
  - devotional practices and church architecture, 342–43
  - embroideries of, 600–2
  - fortification architecture, 365–66
  - glass art, 569f, 569–70, 572
  - housing in, 358–60
  - iconography of, 257–58, 258f
  - images, 59–60
  - intercession and salvation in devotional objects, 530–36
  - introduction to, 3, 6f
  - jewelry and adornment, 580–81
  - liturgical objects, 504–11
  - manuscripts of, 186
  - monastic archaeology of, 296
  - monumental painting during, 429–30
  - religious architecture of, 322–27
  - rural archaeology, 297
  - stone sculpture during, 452
  - tablewares, 558–60
- Late Roman era, 288, 365, 367, 553
- Latin cross, 531
- Latin Interregnum, 464–66, 586. *See also* Crusader art and architecture
- Lazarević, Stefan, 247
- lectionaries (*Evangelia*), 467–68, 468f
- legal excavations, 150–56
- Leontius of Cyprus, 181
- Leo of Chalcedon, 62–63
- Leo V, 81
- Leo VI, 141, 317, 505
- Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, 495–97, 502–3
- Life of St. Anthony the Younger*, 91–93
- Life of St. Symeon Salos*, 91–93
- Life of the Patriarch Tarasius*, 31
- literary and visual art. *See also* illuminated religious manuscripts; illuminated secular manuscripts; liturgical writing; manuscripts
- acrostic composition, 162–63
  - antithesis and comparison, 163–67
  - carved inscriptions, 452
  - literary texts, 481–84
  - relationship between, 159–60
  - repetition and variation in, 160–62
  - selective realism, 167–70
  - summary of, 170–71
- Little Metropolis in Athens, 52–53. *See also spolia*
- liturgical objects. *See also* Attarouthi Treasure; Beth Misona Treasure; censers; Kaper Koraon Treasure
- Early Byzantine era, 496–97
- “Fieschi-Morgan Staurotheke”, 504, 505, 585–86
- future research directions, 511
- introduction to, 495–96
- Late Antique period, 496–97
- Late Byzantine era, 504–11
- Middle Byzantine era, 504–11
- in Ravenna, 502–3
- silver hoards, 497–504
- liturgical writing. *See also* illuminated religious manuscripts
- Euchologia* manuscripts, 461, 466–68
  - in manuscripts, 122–23
  - poetry, 36
  - ritual and church architecture, 334–37
  - text in monumental painting and, 433
- Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 466

- Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (Vasari), 217
- living portraits, 134–35
- Ludwig I of Bavaria, 272–74, 279
- Macedonian Renaissance, 3, 546
- Macrina, 526
- “Madonna della Madia” icon, 222
- magical objects, 85–86
- magical thinking, 86–87
- magic in Byzantine art. *See also* amulets; apotropaic power of images/objects; healing amulets/magic
- collective conventions in, 91–93
  - devotional objects and, 527–30
  - enkolpia* pendants, 110–11
  - further research directions, 95
  - healing amulets/magic, 87, 527–30
  - integral role of, 85–86
  - Kelsey amulet, 91–94, 92f
  - language studies and, 85
  - magical thinking and, 86–87
  - meaning of magic, 86–87
  - papyrus inscriptions, 86–87, 90
  - persuasive analogy and function, 87–90
  - protection amulets/magic, 87
  - show acts, 93–94
  - signification, defined
  - speech acts, 90–93
    - Woman with the Issue of Blood, 109–10
    - womb amulets, 530, 536
- Major *Sakkos* of Photios, 601–2
- makeup use, 103
- Makrembolites, Eustathios, 424
- Malaja Pereščepina treasure, 498–99
- maniera greca*, 223
- manuscripts. *See also* illuminated religious manuscripts; illuminated secular manuscripts
- Late Byzantine era, 186
  - liturgical writing in, 122–23
  - Middle Byzantine traditions, 226
  - painting of, 182–84
  - Vatican manuscript, 461
  - Vienna Dioscorides manuscript, 485–87, 486f
- maphorion* attire, 26
- maps/plotting, 370–71
- marble icon screen, 27
- Mar Musa el-Habashi (Moses the Ethiopian), 210
- marriage rings, 90
- martyria*, 225
- martyrs, 104–6, 105f, 160
- Marzamemi church-shipwreck, 446–47
- masonry techniques, 319
- “master builder,” 322
- Matejič Monastery, 247
- material culture, 59, 85–86, 90, 112–13, 180–81, 287, 288
- material images and imagination of spectator, 31
- material *spolia*, 52–53
- Matrona of Pergē, 103
- mausoleums, 237–38, 243, 248, 279–80, 322, 323–24
- medallions, 508, 581, 583f
- medicine, texts on, 485–88
- medieval ekphrasis, 32, 34–35
- Melisende, Queen, 225–26, 227f
- Menil Collection, 9, 264–65
- menologion* texts, 467, 472, 473f
- Mesarites, Nikolaos, 428
- metalwork. *See also* Attarouthi Treasure; Beth Misona Treasure; censers; coins; enamel/enameling; Kaper Koraon Treasure; *Pentapyrgion* cupboard; silver production; silver stamps
- base metal icons, 515–16
  - cast bronze icons, 519–22, 521f
  - coins and, 515
  - in Constantinople, 503–4
  - future research directions, 522–23
  - in jewelry, 576
  - magic and, 86–87, 90
  - repoussé* icons in copper, 516–18
- Metaphrastes, Symeon, 63, 472
- Metochites, Theodore, 325, 430
- Metropolitan Museum of Art, 11, 12, 90, 91–93, 148, 223, 582, 586
- Michael VIII, 133, 140, 423–24
- Middle Byzantine era
- application of term, 288
  - architecture of, 316–22
  - body adornment and modification, 101–2, 110–11

- Bulgarian ecclesiastical architecture, 376
- devotional practices and church architecture, 339–42
- fortification architecture, 364–65
- glass arts, 567–68, 571, 572–73
- housing in, 356–59, 357*f*
- iconography of, 65, 110–11
- imperial portraits of, 139–40
- introduction to, 3, 5*f*, 7–8
- ivory use in, 543
- jewelry and adornment, 111–12, 579–80
- liturgical objects, 504–11
- manuscript traditions, 226
- natural history texts, 487
- rural archaeology, 297
- stone sculpture during, 448–50
- tablewares, 554–60
- urban centers in, 295–96
- woven silks, 594, 595–600, 597*f*, 599*f*
- Mileševa Monastery, 244
- military architecture of the Crusaders, 225
- Milutin, Stefan Uroš II, 245–47, 364, 378
- Minnesota Morea project, 358–59
- miracles not made by human hands, 36–38
- Mljet shipwreck, 568
- monasteries. *See also* specific monasteries
- archaeology of, 296
- Byzantine architecture of, 311–12
- in Georgia, 192–94, 197
- in Islam and the Middle East, 208–9, 210
- secular art in, 122–24
- in Serbia, 241–46
- Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (Middle Egypt), 419, 420*f*
- Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara (Lower Egypt), 419
- Monastery of Christ of Chora, Constantinople, 223–24, 325*f*, 325
- Monastery of St. Anthony, 208–9
- monasticism, 34, 81, 344, 530
- monochromatic designs of woven silks, 598–99
- monogram art, 180, 508–9, 509*f*
- monumental painting, post-Iconoclasm. *See also* ornament and monumental painting
- in ecclesiastical structures, 425–38
- introduction to, 423
- materials use and techniques, 425–28
- ornament and, 437*f*, 437–38
- palace paintings, 424–25
- painters and workshops, 428–30
- patronage and, 430–31
- phenomenology and, 436
- ritual performance and, 435–36
- in secular structures, 423–25
- texts and images, 431–35
- monumental painting, pre-Iconoclasm, 409–20.
- See also* Red Monastery murals; Sta. Maria Antiqua; tomb paintings
- monuments, 124–26, 135–37, 137*f*, 296
- Monza Treasury, 91–93
- Morgan, J.P., 148
- Morgan Library & Museum, 186
- Morris, William, 271, 280–81
- mosaics
- Apostles in, 162–63
- Blachernai mosaic, 26
- Byzantine mosaics, 225–26, 392
- checkerboarding in, 396–97
- dating of, 392–93
- defined, 391
- floor mosaics, 126–28, 202–4, 397–98, 410
- fourth to ninth centuries, 397–401
- future research questions, 405–6
- glass use in, 568, 572–73
- imitation of in wall painting, 410–11, 428
- introduction to, 391–93
- in Islamic and Middle Eastern churches, 202–4
- in Italy, 218–20, 219*f*
- making of, 393–97, 395*f*
- of Muslims, 401
- Nativity mosaic, 165, 166*f*. *See also* Holy Land
- ninth to fifteenth centuries, 402–5
- production of, 80
- purpose of, 2
- Ravenna, S. Apollinare in Classe, mosaic, 162–63
- repetition and variation of, 160–62
- of secular subjects, 122
- social status and bodily adornment in, 106
- wall mosaics, 398–99
- mosques in Islamic and Middle East, 205–6
- Mother of God, Joy of All Who Suffer, 70

- Mother of God of Ljeviša in Prizren, 245–46
- Moussaieff, Shlomo, 149
- movement in sacred time, 63
- Mren church, 178–80, 179*f*, 186–87
- Mstislav of Tmutarakan, 379–80
- Mtskheta church, 189–90, 191
- Muhammad, Prophet, 205, 207
- multiethnic patronage in Crusader states, 224–28
- multivalent artistic languages, 226
- murals/mural art
- Byzantine revival and, 273–74
  - in Georgian churches, 193–94, 194*f*, 197, 198
  - glass decoration used in, 572–73
  - introduction to, 12
  - jewelry in Cretan murals, 580
  - Red Monastery murals, 22
  - Tsalenjikha murals, 198
- Muscovite painters, 261–62
- Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki, 11, 12
- musica humana*, 35
- musica mundana*, 35
- Muslims, 204–9, 401. *See also* Islamic and Middle Eastern art and architecture
- Myrepsos, Nikolaos, 570
- myth of Venice, 220
- mythological scenes and personifications, 119, 125–26
- naos/naiskos* shrines, 24–25
- natural history texts, 485–88
- naturalistic style, 222–24
- natural world depictions/images, 122–23
- Nazianzus, Gregory, 474–76
- Nea Ekklesia church, 316–17
- Near Eastern Byzantine art, 1, 147, 151, 152, 541, 579, 599*f*
- Nea Roma* cultural ideology, 47–48, 54
- Nemanja, Stefan, 242–43, 377
- Nemanjić, Sava, 244
- Neo-Classicism, 271
- neugriechish* (neo-Greek), 275–76
- New Act to Protect German Cultural Property, 152, 154
- “New Archaeology,” 290
- New Testament, 463–66
- Nicaean Empire, 326
- Nicholas II de St. Omer, 423–24
- Nicholas the Sophist, 163–64
- Nicomachi-Symmachi Diptych, 541–42
- Nikephoros I, 531
- Nikephoros II, 103–4, 123
- Nikephoros III, 106, 107*f*
- Niketas of Heraclea, 461–62
- Noli me Tangere*, 260–61, 261*f*, 264–65
- non-figural ornament in secular art, 119
- non-stratigraphic excavation, 292
- Norman and Byzantine terminology, 277
- Norman Italian ecclesiastical architecture, 383–86
- Normans of Sicily, 218–20, 599–600
- “North Church” of the Monastery of Lips, 317
- Northern European Gothic, 276
- Notitia* (episcopal lists), 289–90
- numismatic jewelry, 133–34
- Nursing Virgin, 65
- Obelisk Base of Theodosius, 135
- obelisks, 47–48, 49*f*
- occult sciences, 86–87
- Odeion-Terrace House, 414–15
- official art, defined, 120–21
- Olaf, King, 225–26
- Old Testament, 70, 221, 332, 460–63
- omophorion* stole, 108
- On Diseases IV* (Hippocratic text), 89–90
- onyx use in Hagia Sophia church, Constantinople, 33–35, 41–42
- opus interrasile* technique, 578*f*, 578–79
- opus mixtum* technique, 322–23, 324–25
- Orchomenos, spolia, 51
- ornament and monumental painting, 437*f*, 437–38
- Ornithiaka* (Dionysios), 487
- Orthodox Baptistery, Ravenna, 411
- Orthodox Christianity, 81, 104, 190–91, 255–56, 257, 261–62, 386, 593. *See also* devotional practices and church architecture
- Orthodox Creed, 189–90
- Orthodox iconography, 59–60, 67–70
- Orthodox liturgy, 1, 91, 600–1
- Ortiz, George, 149
- Ostrogoths, 374, 399–400

- Ottoman Turks, 67, 360, 404–5, 445  
 Our Lady of the Carmelites, 229  
 Oxy. 1449 papyrus, 23–24
- Pachymeres, George, 423–24  
 pagan iconography/images, 27, 110–11, 120–21, 126–28, 413–14  
 pagan places of worship, 309–10  
 Painted Wares, 553  
*Painter's Manual of Dionysius of Fournà*, 60–61  
 painters of monumental painting, 428–30  
 paintings. *See also* frescoes; icons;  
   monumental painting: pre-Iconoclastic;  
   monumental painting: post-Iconoclastic;  
   murals; palace paintings  
 catacomb paintings, 90  
   Christ in Majesty painting, 209  
   Crusader-sponsored paintings, 423–24  
   Dura Europos paintings, 8  
   Egyptian paintings, 21  
   Georgian schools of, 196  
   Gospel of the Eight Painters, 186  
   Islamic and Middle Eastern, 202–4  
   Italian Gothic paintings, 165  
   in the Late Antique period, 22  
   manuscript painting, 182–84  
   in Moldavian churches, 259  
   naturalistic style, 222–24  
   panel paintings, 21, 22, 23–24, 542–43  
   tomb paintings, 409, 410, 413–16, 414f  
   two-dimensional paintings, 25  
   wall painting in Antinoöpolis, Egypt, 101  
 palace paintings, 424–25  
 Pala d'Oro altar piece, 220, 221f  
 palaeographic inference for dating, 459  
 Palaiologan Renaissance, 245–46, 247  
 Palaiologan style, 223–24  
 Palaiologos, George, 123  
 Palaiologos, Michael, 601  
 paleoanthropological studies of human  
   remains, 296  
 Palgrave, Frances, 278–79  
 Panagia Gorgoepikoos (Little Metropolis), 52.  
   *See also* spolia  
 Panagia Krina church, 322–23  
 Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki, Greece,  
   434–35
- Panagia tou Arakos at Lagoudera, 228–29  
*panegyrikon* writings, 476  
 Panselinos, Manuel, 428–29, 601–2  
 Pantanassa Monastery, 326  
 Pantokratör Monastery, Constantinople  
   (Zeyrek Camii), 585–86  
 papyrus inscriptions, 86–87, 90  
*Pareangelmata Polorcetica*, 489–91  
*parekklesia*, defined, 337  
 Partecipacius, Doge Justinian, 381–82  
*pastophoria*, defined, 335–36  
 patens, 505–8, 509, 510f. *See also* liturgical  
   objects  
 patristic authors, 459  
 patronage and monumental painting, 430–31  
 Paul the Silentiary, 33, 41–42  
 pectoral crosses, 526–30, 531–33  
*Pentapyrgion* cupboard, 504–5  
 perennial Hellenism, 7  
 performative imagery, 93  
 perfume use, 103. *See also* bodily adornment  
   and modification  
 Pergamon settlement, 358  
*peridromos* construction, 368, 369  
 periodicization of Byzantine era, 3  
 peristyle house design, 354–55, 355f  
 Peter the Iberian, 526  
 Petit, J.L., 277–78  
 phenomenology and monumental painting, 436  
 Philes, Manuel, 41, 424  
 Phocian Red Slip Ware, 553  
 Phokas, Nikephoros, 138f, 138–39, 572  
*phylakterion* use, 525, 536, 575. *See also*  
   amulets; magic in Byzantine art  
*Physiologos* text, 487–88  
 Pigeon House Church at Çavuşin, 123  
 Pisano, Giunta, 67  
 Pliny the Elder, 91–93  
 “Pliska Cross”, 504, 531. *See also* liturgical  
   objects  
 poems and images in monumental painting,  
   433  
*poikilia*, in materials, 33, 38–42, 39f, 40f  
*poikilia/varietas* (changing appearances), 32  
 political-ideological reasons for spolia, 52–53, 54  
 polychrome painted decoration, 554, 555f  
 Polyuktos, Saint, 27

- polystavria* vestments, 425–26
- Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), 151
- portable arts of Islam, 204, 208
- portraiture, 123–24, 124*f*. *See also* imperial portraiture
- post-Byzantine art (“Byzance après Byzance”), 59–60, 255–67. *See also* Muscovite painters
- posters in fortification architecture, 369
- praetorium* architecture, 352–53
- Preljubović, Thomas, 509, 510*f*, 586
- Preslav Treasure, 579, 580*f*. *See also* enamel/enameling; jewelry and adornment; metalwork
- private collecting and the art market
- antiquities market and, 151–53
  - art history and archaeology, 153–54
  - brief history of, 147–48
  - consequences of, 154–55
  - contemporary collections, 149
  - excavations, legal and illegal, 150–56
  - possible solutions for, 155–56
  - provenance and, 149–50
- Procopius, 290–91
- Proeleusis, Michael, 428–29
- profane aesthetic in secular art, 120–21
- pro-image theology, 80
- Prophet Books, 463
- proskomide*, defined, 335–36
- proskynesis* icon, 61–62, 77
- protection amulets/magic, 87
- prothesis*, defined, 335–36, 339
- Protoevangelium of James*, 25–26, 476
- provenance and private collecting, 149–50
- Psalter manuscripts, 468–71, 469*f*, 470*f*
- Psellos, Michael, 101, 103, 104–6
- Pseudo-Arabic motifs in jewelry, 111–12
- Ptolemy, *Geographia Hyphegesis*, 489
- pyxides*, 541–42. *See also* ivories/ivory figures; liturgical objects
- Qasr Ibn Wardan church and palace, 208
- quotidian objects, 129
- Ravenna
- Sant’Apollinare Nuovo, 104, 160, 162–63, 374
  - San Vitale, 374, 396–97, 399–400, 400*f*, 401, 406, 503
- red-ground silks, 596
- Red Monastery church, Upper Egypt, 22, 411, 412*f*, 412–13, 418
- Red Slip Wares, 553
- religious architecture. *See also* Byzantine Commonwealth ecclesiastical architecture; Christian church art and architecture; Islamic and Middle Eastern art and architecture
- of Constantine the Great, 309–13
  - of the Early Byzantine era, 309–16
  - eleventh to twelfth centuries, 319–22
  - of Justinian, 313–14, 374
  - of the Late Byzantine era, 322–27
  - of the Middle Byzantine era, 316–22
  - ninth to tenth centuries, 316–27
  - seventh to ninth centuries, 314–16
- religious pilgrimages, 23
- Renaissance art, 8, 229–31
- reuse of art and architectural material. *See spolia*
- rhetorical arts, 90
- Rice, David Talbot, 12, 519
- ritual performance and monumental painting, 435–36
- ritual power in the Byzantine period, 85–86
- rock-cut complexes, 356–58
- Roman architectural spolia, 48
- Roman Empire, 235–36, 363, 374, 393–94, 401, 402
- Romanesque Byzantine, 277
- Roman funerary stelae, 51–52, 53*f*
- Roman I Lakapenos, 317
- Romanos Ivory, 545–46
- Roman portraits, 22
- Rossano Gospels, 464
- Round Church (Golden Church), Preslav, 375
- Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 264–65, 530
- Rublev, Andrei, 70
- rural archaeology, 297
- ruralization, 358
- Ruskin, John, 229–31, 271, 278–81
- Russian Byzantine art, 1
- Russian ecclesiastical architecture, 378–80
- Russian iconography, 70
- Sabas, St., 508
- Sacra Parallela* (John of Damascus), 477

- Sacré-Coeur, Paris, 275
- sacred vessels (*vasa sacra*), 500–1
- “Sailing to Byzantium” (Yeats), 1, 271
- Sainte-Marie-Majeure, 275, 276
- salvation and devotional objects, 530–36
- Salviati, Antonio, 279–80
- Salzenberg, Wilhelm, 274–75
- Samuel, Emperor, 237
- sanctuary architecture, 335–36
- San Marco basilica, 220, 382, 383*f*
- San Marco Treasury, 568
- San Paolo fuori le Mura, 272
- sardonyx chalice, 505, 506*f*
- Sassanian art, 207–8, 212
- satellite photography, 291–92
- Schmidt, Christian, 149
- science and technology in secular art, 119
- sculpture. *See also* Colossus of Barletta  
 on building exteriors, 451–52  
 “Byzantinizing” sculptures, 221  
 decoration of interior spaces, 449–50  
 defined, 443–44  
 Early Byzantine era, 446–47, 449  
 future research directions, 453  
 in Hagia Sophia church, Constantinople, 449  
 in Hagia Sophia church, Trebizond, 452, 453*f*  
 introduction to, 443–44  
 Islamic and Middle Eastern, 202–4, 203*f*  
 Late Byzantine era, 452  
 Middle Byzantine era, 448–49  
 quarrying traditions in fourth to seventh centuries, 446–47  
 salvaged stone in seventh to mid-fifteenth centuries, 448–49  
 sarcophagus sculptures, 90  
 sundial sculptures, 452  
 surviving evidence for, 444–45  
 templon sculptures, 450
- secco paintings, 411, 416, 425–26
- Second Bulgarian Empire, 237–40, 375–76
- Second Council of Nicaea, 22
- Second Cyprus Treasure, 148
- Second Iconoclasm period, 81
- secular architecture, 120, 124–26, 193, 197  
 towers in fortification architecture, 369–70, 371*f*
- secular art  
 in churches and monasteries, 122–24  
 in cities, 124–26  
 definition attempts, 117, 118–21  
 in the home, 126–30, 127*f*, 128*f*  
 introduction to, 9, 117–18  
 monumental painting, post-Iconoclasm, 423–25  
 portraiture, 123–24, 124*f*  
 summary of, 130
- secular domestic architecture  
 Early Byzantine housing, 351–56  
 future research directions, 360  
 introduction to, 351  
 Late Byzantine housing, 358–60  
 Middle Byzantine housing, 356–59, 357*f*
- secular military architecture  
 construction and maintenance responsibilities, 364–65  
 construction and morphology, 367–70  
 fortification architecture, 363–64, 366–70  
 fortification locations, 365–66  
 future research directions, 370–72  
 historical evidence, 363–65  
 overall layouts, 366–67
- segmentae* ornaments, 101
- selective realism, 167–70
- semi-croix-libre* in church architecture, 191
- Senkschmelz* enamels, 585–86
- Septimius Severus and Family* (panel painting), 22–23
- Serbian art and architecture. *See also* Mileševa Monastery  
 beginning of, 241  
 future research directions, 248  
 overview of, 241–48  
 summit and decline of, 245–48  
 turning point in, 242–44
- Serbian ecclesiastical architecture, 377–78
- The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Ruskin), 279
- sfoungatera* cooking pot, 553
- sgraffito/sgraffiato* technique, 555–56
- Shaw, Norman, 281
- sigillography, 153–54
- signification, defined, 85
- Sikountenos, Leo, 118–19, 423–24
- silk hangings, 139, 140



- silver-gilt *enkolpia*, 535–36  
 silver liturgical hoards, 497–504  
 silver production, 7  
 silver stamps, 7  
 Simeon, 236–37  
 Sinai hymnal, 471–72  
 Sion Treasure, 500, 501–3  
 Skevophylakion at Mt. Sinai, 11  
 Skylitzes, John, 484  
 smugglers/smuggling, 151  
 social elites, 235–36  
 social rank/status, 106–9, 126–28  
 social unity and equality, 281  
 socioeconomic status, 9  
*solea*, defined, 336–37  
 Soranus of Ephesus, 91–93  
 Sotheby's, 151–52  
 South Slavic art and architecture  
   Bulgaria, 236–40  
   introduction to, 235–36  
   Serbia, 241–48  
 spiritual adornment, 100  
 spiritual mission of Byzantine art, 2  
*spolia*  
   aesthetic reasons for, 52–53, 54, 55  
   in architecture, 50–52  
   in art, 47–48  
   as constructive and destructive  
     act, 55–56  
   column, 50–51  
   cultural reasons for, 52–53, 54  
   defined, 47  
   exterior stone decoration, 452  
   figural, 50–52  
   future research directions, 55–56  
   *ideology* reasons for, 52–53  
   interpretatio Christiana *spolia*, 52–53  
   material, 52–53  
   motivations for, 52–55  
   Orchomenos, 51  
   political-ideological reasons for, 52–53, 54  
   pragmatic reasons for, 52–53, 54  
   religious-magical reasons for, 54  
   Roman architectural, 48  
   *spolium*, defined, 47  
 SS. Trinità di Delia church, 384–85, 385f  
 St. Alexis iconography, 70, 71f  
 St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai, 60, 70,  
   223, 226–28, 343–44, 410–11, 419  
 St. Demetrius in the Markov Monastery at  
   Sušica, 378  
 St. Eustathios of Thessaloniki cult, 246–47  
 St. George at Staro Nagoričino, 165  
 St. George iconography, 68f, 76–77  
 St. Mary's at Wreay, Cumbria, 277, 278f  
 St. Nicholas *tes Stegix* at Kakopetria, 229  
 St. Peter's Basilica, 310, 401  
 St. Sophia in Ohrid, 435–36  
 St. Thomas in Kuti, 241  
 Sta. Maria Antiqua, 417–18  
 steatites as devotional objects, 549  
 Stephen of Bostra, 77  
 St-Front in Périgueux, 276  
 Stone of Unction, 322  
*The Stones of Venice* (Ruskin), 279, 280–81  
 storage vessels, 552  
 Stoudites, Theodore, 31–32  
 stratigraphic recording, 292–93  
 Strzygowski, Josef, 186–87  
 Studenica Monastery, 243, 244  
 Studios Monastery, 311  
 subdivision of houses, 354  
 sundial sculptures, 452  
 Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, 190f  
 Swenigorodskoi collection, 148  
 symploke, defined, 160  
*synaxarion* (lections for the movable feasts), 467  
*synaxarion* texts, 472  
 syncretism and iconography, 22–24  
*Synopsis historiarum* (Skylitzes), 484  
 synthetic works in fortification architecture,  
   370–71  
 Syriac Bible, 530  
 Syrian Fathers, 192  
  
 tablewares  
   Early Byzantine era, 553–54  
   Late Byzantine era, 558–60  
   Middle Byzantine era, 554–60  
   overview of, 553–60  
*Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (TIB), 297–98  
 Tao-Klardjeti school, 192–93, 196  
 Taylor, Hero Granger, 598  
*teganía* cooking pot, 553

- Temple of Jerusalem, 332
- templon* art/architecture, 22, 26–28, 122–23, 450, 518f
- terrestrial spheres, 31
- tetraconch* in church architecture, 191
- textile media
- embroideries of Late Byzantine, 600–2
  - future research directions, 602–3
  - introduction to, 593–94
  - Late Antique and Early Byzantine, 594–95, 595f
  - woven silks, 594, 595–600, 597f, 599f
- texts and images in monumental painting, 431–35
- thematic works, 7
- Theodora (wife of Justinian), 108–9, 110, 123, 218
- Theodore, Saint, 237
- Theodore I Laskaris, 50
- Theodore Psalter, 469–70
- Theodosia's portrait, 101–2, 102f, 104
- Theodosius I, 49f
- theological texts and compilations, 476–77
- Theophano, Empress, 103–4
- Theophilos, 81
- Theorianos, Ioannes o, 428–29
- Theotokos church at Gračanica, 342–43
- theotokos* title, 25–26
- Theriaka* (Nikander), 487
- Thessalonikan churches, 326, 572. *See also* *Acheiropoietos*
- Thessaloniki *Epitaphios*, 601, 602f
- Thessaloniki tableware production center, 558–59
- Third Antirrheticus* (Nikephoros), 531
- Thomaïs of Lesbos, 104–6
- three-aisled basilica, 312–13
- three-part folding icon, 25
- tiraz* in Islamic art, 111–12
- Tomb of Chrysanthios, 413, 414f
- tomb paintings, 409, 410, 413–16, 414f
- tomb structures (*martyrium*), 201–2
- Tornikios, George, 104–6
- Tower of Karakallou monastery, 371f
- “Traditions of Magic in Late Antiquity” (Bohak), 85–86
- transport vessels, 551–52
- transvestite female saints, 109
- trapeza* (refectory) architecture, 344
- Trimithis (Amheida) painted houses, 414–15, 415f
- Trinity Church in the Sopoćani Monastery, 244
- tripartite sanctuary, 335–36, 339, 340, 374–79, 384
- True Cross, 526–30, 531, 533–35
- Tsalenjikha murals, 198
- turbans in Islamic art, 111–12
- two-dimensional paintings, 25
- Tzimiskes, John, Emperor, 103–4, 138–39
- Ukrainian ecclesiastical architecture, 378–80
- Umayyad mosque, 205–6, 206f
- undercutting technique, 544–45
- underwater sites, 292
- UNESCO Convention 1970 (UNESCO 1970), 154
- Universal History of Stepanos Tarōnets'i*, 182.
- See also* Armenia/Armenian Republic
- unofficial art, defined, 120–21
- urban archaeology, 294–95
- urbanism/urban building, 125
- Uroš I, Stefan, 244
- Uroš V, Stefan, 247
- Valentinian III, 399–400
- Vasari, Giorgio, 217
- Vatican Kings, 461
- Vatican Manasses, 238–39
- Vatican Museums, 91–93, 149
- Vatopedi Monastery, Mt. Athos, 341–42, 342f
- Veroli Casket, 543–44, 545f
- Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 262, 520
- Vienna Dioscorides manuscript, 485–87, 486f
- Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène, 276
- Virgin and Child *Eleousa*, 63
- Virgin and Child *Glykophilousa*, 63, 64f, 65, 67
- Virgin and Child iconography
- bodily adornment and modification, 110–11
  - Constantinopolitan models for, 238
  - in devotional objects, 532, 533
  - formulation of images, 59, 60, 62–63
  - in Hagia Sophia church, Constantinople, 81.
  - See also* mosaics
  - in illuminated religious manuscripts, 469–70
  - Lamentation of the Virgin, 63, 222–23
  - as model for other images, 223
  - motherly grief in, 222–23, 228–29
  - Nursing Virgin, 65
  - replication of, 67–69

- Virgin and Child with Man of Sorrows, 63  
 Virgin *Arakiotissa*, 228–29  
 Virgin as Intercessor marble relief, 448  
 Virgin as the *Theotokos* at the Council of Ephesus, 63–65  
 Virgin Evergetis monastery, 243  
 Virgin Hodegetria, 320  
 Virgin *Konevitsa*, 69  
 Virgin of Tenderness, 63  
 Virgin *orans*, 532  
 Virgin Peribleptos, 319  
 Virgin seated with the Christ Child, 162  
 Virgin with the Playing Child, 63  
 visual culture/studies in art history, 491–92  
 visual language of magic, 93–94  
*vita* icon, 61–62  
 Vladimir of Kiev, 378–79  
 Vladimir of Novgorod, 380  
*Vollschmelz cloisonné* enamels, 505  
 Voronež katholikon, 258–59, 259f  
 votive inscriptions, 508
- Wadi al-Natrun (Scetis) in Lower Egypt, 418–19  
 wall painting in Antinoöpolis, Egypt, 101  
 Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, 24–25, 91–93
- warfare texts, 489–91  
 Water Newton Treasure, 497–98, 498f, 501. *See also* liturgical objects; metalwork  
 Weitzmann, Kurt, 222–23, 487  
 Wessel, Klaus, 133, 586  
 White Monastery in Upper Egypt, 311–12, 413–14  
 Wikimedia Commons, 11  
 William of Moerbeke, 51–52  
 William of Tyre, 210  
 window panes, 573  
 Woman with the Issue of Blood, 109–10  
 womb amulets, 530, 536  
 Wonderworker of All Russia, 70  
 wood panel icon, 26  
 woven silks, 594, 595–600, 597f, 599f
- Yeats, William Butler, 1, 271
- Zanini, Enrico, 299  
 Zappeion exhibition (1964), 12  
 Zeuxippus Ware, 558–59  
 Zigabenos, Euthymios, 299  
 Zonaras, John, 103–4, 141  
 zoning practices, 352  
 Zvart‘nots’ church, 178, 180













